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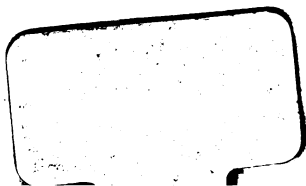
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# THE BOOK OF PRAISES.

UNWIN BROTHERS, PRINTERS, BUCKLESBURY, E.C.

THE  
BOOK OF PRAISES:

BEING THE

Book of Psalms,

ACCORDING TO THE AUTHORIZED VERSION,

With Notes Original and Selected,

BY

WILLIAM HENRY ALEXANDER.

EDITED BY HIS FAMILY.



London:

JACKSON, WALFORD, AND HODDER,  
27, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

MDCCCLXVII.

101. g. 160.

**"WHOSO OFFERETH PRAISE GLORIFIETH ME,"—Psalm l. 23.**

## PREFACE.

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THE following Notes, written or compiled by William Henry Alexander, are the fruit of deep study of the Sacred volume, both in its original and in its modern tongues, and of much careful reading of the best Biblical critics.

W. H. Alexander was a good Hebrew and Greek scholar, a well-read and deep-thinking man, but naturally reserved, and so modest of his knowledge, that even his most intimate friends were little acquainted with the depth of his mental acquirements and experience.

Knowing that he was sound in the faith of the Gospel, and having witnessed the mellowing of his Christian character as he advanced in life, his Widow believes that these Notes are worthy of some confidence; whilst, therefore, their author appears never to have contemplated their publication, she does not feel herself justified in withholding them from the world.

SOPHIA ALEXANDER.

IPSWICH, *10th month*, 1865.

In fulfilling the trust committed to them by a beloved Parent, who was gathered to her rest a few weeks after the above was penned, the editors deem it right to explain that the Notes in this volume were compiled in the intervals of relaxation from the cares of an active

business life (being written on the margin of a copy of "Bagster's Comprehensive Bible"), and were completed some years since. Although, as stated above, they do not appear to have been designed for use beyond the circle of the author's family and friends, yet, with his usual care and precision, they were left in so complete a form that it is hoped the work will not suffer materially for want of his final revision.

Consisting, as many of the Notes do, of extracts from the works of eminent critics—and these quoted frequently in a condensed form—it is believed that a large amount of valuable information will be found in a small compass, affording to the thoughtful Christian mind matter for profitable reflection, as well as a stimulus to further research among the treasures of this portion of the Sacred volume.

*12th month, 1866.*

## ABBREVIATIONS.

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- Ab.** Abridged.  
**App.** Appendix.  
**B.C.B.** Bagster's Comprehensive Bible.  
**E.T.** English Translation.

## ERRATA.

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- Page** 27. The\* should be placed at end of verse 9.  
" 84. Sixth line from bottom, for *thina*, read *thina*.  
" 87. In note to verse 84, for נְתַתָּהּ read נְתַתָּהּ  
" 89. Seventh line from bottom, for *collected*, read *collated*.  
" 165. Eighth line " for *Silva's*, read *Siloa's*.  
" 219. Last line " for *root*, read *roof*.  
" 290. Fourth line " for *expression*, read *expiation*.  
" 345. Eleventh line from top, for *epanedos*, read *epanodos*.  
" 410. Tenth line from bottom, for *Thir*, read *Their*.





## THE BOOK OF PRAISES.

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IN addition to Commentaries on the Scriptures generally, the following works on the Psalms exclusively are quoted or referred to in the subjoined Observations and Notes, under the names, simply, of their respective Authors :—“The Psalms in Hebrew, with a Critical, Exegetical, and Philological Commentary, by the Rev. G. Phillips, B.D.” Two vols. 8vo., 1846. “Commentary on the Psalms, by E. W. Hengstenberg, Dr. and Professor of Theology in Berlin : translated from the German by Fairbairn and Thomson.” Three vols. 8vo., 1845—8. This excellent work forms a portion of the valuable series comprised in Clark’s Foreign Theological Library. “A Literal Translation of the Book of Psalms, intended to illustrate their Poetical and Moral Structure : with Dissertations on the word *Selah*, and on the Authorship, Order, Titles, and Poetical Features of the Psalms, by the Rev. John Jebb, M.A.” (son, I presume, of Bishop Jebb, the Author of “Sacred Literature.”) Two vols., 8vo., 1846. “The Book of Psalms, translated from the Hebrew, with Notes Explanatory and Critical, by Samuel Horsley, LL.D., late Bishop of St. Asaph.” Two vols., 8vo., 1818. “Commentary on the Psalms, by Bishop Horne.”



## INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS.

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### HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE PSALMODIC POETRY.

THE use of sacred lyrical poetry among the Hebrews was coeval with their national existence. No sooner had they escaped from the pursuit of their Egyptian oppressors, than "Moses and the children of Israel" celebrated their miraculous deliverance in a triumphal song of praise to God; to which the women, with Miriam at their head (Ex. xv. 1—21), responded with "timbrels and dances," or pipes. One of the Psalms bears the name, as its reputed author, of their great lawgiver (Psalm xc.); and the form of benediction prescribed by him to Aaron and his sons (Numb. vi. 22—26), as well as the words he uttered when the ark set forward and rested (Numb. x. 35, 36), are re-echoed in various ways in the Psalms.\* Like their ancestor, Jacob, he conveyed his parting warning and prophetic blessing to his people in verse (Deut. xxxii., xxxiii.); and the effusions of his thoughts and feelings, on that deeply interesting and solemn occasion, bespeak the master-mind of a sacred poet.

The song of Deborah and Barak (Judges v.), is a triumphal ode parallel with that of their forefathers at the Red Sea: and the song of Hannah on the birth of her son, the future prophet Samuel, is an example of similar composition of a more individual character,

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\* See the References, Bagster's Bible, and compare especially Num. vi. 24, "Keep thee," and vi. 26, "Give thee peace," with Psalms cxxi. and cxxii., of which, as remarked in Introductory Note to the "Songs of Degrees," Psalm cxx., &c., "Keep and Peace" are the characteristic words: Num. vi. 26, "Lift up his countenance," with Psalm iv. 6, xlii. 5—11, xliii. 5; and Num. x. 35 with Psalm lxviii. 1.

yet expanding into national feeling. The concluding sentiments of the former, and many of the latter, are reproduced in several of the Psalms.\*

Besides the pieces of poetry which we thus find interspersed in the Scripture history, there appear to have existed, from an early period, some collections of short lyrical compositions, commemorative of remarkable events or distinguished persons; as "the Book of the Wars of the Lord," and "the Book of Jasher," which, from the mention made of them, were probably of this character. The former is referred to in the twenty-first chapter of Numbers, where a specimen of its contents is given, verses 14 to 18, to which may perhaps be added verses 27 and 28. "The Book of Jasher" is noticed in Josh. x. 13, as recording the miracle there related; and in 2 Sam. i. 18, as containing David's lamentation over Saul and Jonathan.

But though the elements of a national Psalmody were thus in existence, it does not appear to have acquired a complete and systematic form till the age of David. For the prosperous and permanent condition which it attained under his fostering hand, the foundation had no doubt been laid in the religious revival effected under the administration of the eminent judge and prophet, Samuel. In his time, allusion is first made to certain associations, apparently of an educational character, which have been designated the Schools of the Prophets, and are supposed to have been instituted by him. That Psalmody formed a part of the exercises there practised appears from 1 Sam. x. 5, where the company are represented as prophesying "with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp before them;" and their overpowering influence upon those who were brought within its sphere is manifest from the effect produced upon Saul on the occasion there referred to (1 Sam. x. 9—11), and, at a subsequent time, upon his messengers and himself (1 Sam. xix. 18—24), when in pursuit of David, who had taken refuge amongst them.

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\* Compare, *e.g.*, Judges v. 31 with Psalm lxxxiii. 9, 10, and xcii. 9; 1 Sam. ii. 6, with Psalm lxviii. 20; and 1 Sam. ii. 5—8, with Psalm cxiii. 7—9.

Whether David had, in his more youthful days, been a pupil in the schools of the prophets, and derived in any degree from that source the acquirements which recommended him to the courtiers of Saul as a skilful and pious minstrel, qualified to soothe and calm the troubled and disordered mind of his sovereign, the sacred narrative does not inform us; but it can scarcely be doubted that his intercourse with them and with Samuel, at a somewhat later period at least, was the means of greatly strengthening, if not of awakening, that deep religious feeling which, combined with native ardour of temperament and poetic fire, produced in due time "the sweet Psalmist of Israel;" and led him, under the Divine influence, to record the workings of his soul amid the varied events of a chequered life, and the dealings of God with him in providence and grace, in hymns of supplication and penitence, of warning and encouragement, of thanksgiving and praise, adapted not only for the use of himself and his people, but for the edification of the Church in every age and clime.

When firmly seated on the throne, the first care of the pious monarch was to prepare a sanctuary on Mount Zion for the reception of the ark of the covenant, and to make provision there for the rites and services pertaining to the public worship of God, amongst which, from that period, Psalmody held a conspicuous place. The arrangements for this purpose, which, however, appear not to have been fully completed till towards the close of David's life, and were afterwards continued in the magnificent temple erected by his son and successor, Solomon, comprehended the appointment of four thousand Levites as "singers, with instruments of music," (1 Chron. xxiii. 5—80), "lifting up the voice with joy" (1 Chron. xv. 16—22), "and to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at even." They served in courses (1 Chron. xxv.), and 288 persons, forming twenty-four courses of twelve each, distinguished by their superior skill and proficiency, "that were instructed in the songs of the Lord, even all that were cunning," took precedence of the rest.

The services of this select portion of the choral band, or at least of their presiding officers, are described in terms very similar to

those of the prophets above referred to, as "prophesying with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals," which appear to denote the singing of inspired compositions with musical accompaniments; and several of the names recorded are mentioned also in the titles of some of the Psalms as their authors.

Additions were from time to time made to the collection of Psalms from the era of David to the captivity, and some appear to have been composed after the return from Babylon; but none, probably, at a much later period than that event. "From that time," remarks Hengstenberg (vol. iii., app. 17), "matters again fell much into a beaten track; the movement of souls vanished; men came more and more to look back upon that which the Spirit of God had spoken and sung by his instruments, in those times when the breath of inspiration pervaded the whole people. In the place of God's living organs there was now substituted the learning of Scripture. The Psalter productions as well as the words of prophecy had run their course."

#### ARRANGEMENT OF THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

THE Psalms were divided by the Jews into five books: the first comprehending Psalms i. to xli.; the second, Psalms xlii. to lxxii.; the third, Psalms lxxiii. to lxxxix.; the fourth, Psalms xc. to cvi.; and the fifth, Psalms cvii. to cl.\* The last, being one of a series of Hallelujah Psalms, ends like the preceding four with "Praise ye the Lord;" but Psalms xli., lxxii., lxxxix, and cvi., conclude with doxologies of a more diversified and distinct character, which, however appropriate they may be to the particular Psalms to which they are annexed, would be equally so to many others; and, occurring as they do only at these particular intervals, appear to have been designed to mark the terminations of the respective books. As they are found not only in the Hebrew text, but in all the ancient versions, it may

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\* The numbering of Psalms ix. to cxlvii. in the Septuagint differs from that of the Hebrew, Psalms ix. and x. being written as one, and Psalm cxlvii. divided into two, making the total number the same.

be inferred that the divisions thus denoted, though not recognized, except by the Syriac, in any other manner, existed previously to the Septuagint, the oldest of those versions, being made.

The question naturally arises whether the five books were severally composed at different periods, and subsequently combined in one, or whether the collection was so divided by the compiler of the whole. On the former supposition, we should expect to find the whole of David's Psalms, with the one ascribed to Moses, in the earlier books, and those of latest date in the last book; but so far is this from being the case, that one or two Psalms which appear to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans are inserted in the third book, that of Moses is postponed to the commencement of the fourth, and those of David are distributed throughout the whole; some of them, with one of Solomon's, being interspersed in the fifth book, amongst Psalms composed during or after the Babylonish captivity. This disregard of chronological order, and some principles of classification about to be noticed, which indicate points of view embracing the whole, lead to the conclusion, that, although the Psalms were no doubt handed down from time to time in a more or less collected form, yet, that the arrangement of the whole, as now presented to us, was the work of one hand, or of several persons associated together as joint editors, by whom the doxologies were inserted at the close of the several divisions. The number was probably suggested by that of the books of Moses, to which the Psalms bore an obvious relation, being employed like them in the religious assemblies of the people, and tending to enforce, exemplify, and illustrate the doctrines, precepts, and declarations contained in the Law.

Although the Psalms are not arranged in strict chronological order, neither are they classed according to their subjects, the whole collection being of a very diversified character, and some of a like description being found variously interspersed with others of a different kind; yet, as already intimated, they are not placed without regard to order or connexion. The leading principle of classification, in connexion to a certain extent with authorship, appears to have been the use respectively of the Divine names, *Jehovah* and *Elohim*.



The former sometimes takes the abbreviated, but emphatic form of *Jah*,\* both being generally represented in our Bibles by *Lord* printed in capitals. The same word in small letters stands for the Hebrew *Adonai*, which is equivalent in sense to our English term; and as a designation of the Deity not unfrequently takes the place of *Jehovah*. In a few instances where these two names are combined, our translators render *Jehovah* by *God*, printed in capitals; as *Jehovah Adonai*, *God the Lord*, or *Adonai Jehovah*, *Lord God*. For *Elohim*, which is in the plural form (denoting excellence), the singular, *Eloha*, occurs in a few passages, and much more frequently *El*: the three names being uniformly rendered *God*.

The first book may be properly styled the *Jehovah Psalms* of David, the whole, except four without superscriptions, being ascribed to him as the author. Of the forty-one Psalms which it comprises, eleven have *Jehovah* exclusively, three others *Jehovah* and *Adonai*, and the remaining twenty-seven, *Jehovah* two-hundred-and-eight and *Adonai* ten times, and *Elohim* or *El* only forty-seven times. The second book consists of *Elohim Psalms*—first of “his singers the sons of Korah and Asaph,” and then of David himself. Of the thirty-one Psalms which it contains, ten have *Elohim* or *El* exclusively, in five others *Adonai* occurs once in each, and the remaining sixteen have *Elohim*, *El*, or *Eloha*, one-hundred-and-thirty-three times, and *Jehovah*, *Jah*, or *Adonai*, only forty-two times. In the third book, consisting of eleven Psalms of Asaph, three of the sons of Korah, and one each of David, Heman the Ezrahite, and Ethan the Ezrahite, the disproportion is not so great, the name *Elohim* preponderating in the first twelve, and *Jehovah* in the remaining five. The Psalms in the fourth and fifth books, excepting the one ascribed to Moses, seventeen to David, and one to Solomon, are anonymous. The former book consists entirely, and the latter very nearly, of *Jehovah Psalms*. The chief exception is Psalm cviii., which is a duplicate,

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\* As appears from its use in Psalm lxviii. 4, where our translators very properly retain the Hebrew *Jah*, as they do in a very few instances the word *Jehovah*. It is to be regretted they have not done so in some other passages. See note on Psalm viii. 1.

with little variation, of parts of two Elohim Psalms of the second book (Psalms lvii. and lx.); and in three others the names of each class number alike; but twenty-seven Psalms of these two books have Jehovah, Jah, or Adonai exclusively; the long Psalm (cxix.) has Jehovah twenty-four times, and Elohim only once, and the remaining twenty-nine have Jehovah, Jah, or Adonai two-hundred-and-thirty-eight times, and Elohim or El fifty-four times. It is remarkable that one of the Jehovah Psalms of the first book (Psalm xiv.) reappears with little variation in the second as an Elohim Psalm (liii.), the latter name being substituted for the former throughout; and that the doxologies are in this respect adapted to the classes of Psalms to which they are respectively appended; the first book closing with, "Blessed be *Jehovah*, the God of Israel," &c., the second, "Blessed be *Jehovah Elohim*, the God of Israel," the third, "Blessed be *Jehovah*," and the fourth as the first, "Blessed be *Jehovah*, the God of Israel."\*

So marked a distinction on the part both of the writers and the compiler cannot be regarded as void of significancy; and accordingly the Psalms will be found to present certain characteristic features corresponding with the leading or emphatic use of one or other of the Divine names. Although the name Jehovah, being of the highest import, denoting the Self-existent, Unchangeable, and Eternal, was incommunicable and appropriate only to the true God, yet under this appellation He is most frequently and somewhat

\* The following summary exhibits the respective numbers complete:—

Psalms	Jehovah	Jah	Adonai	Total	Elohim	El	Eloha	Total
Book 1 { 14 have	66	...	4	70	...	...	...	...
{ 27 "	208	...	10	218	47	17	...	64
{ 10 "	...	...	...	...	72	6	...	79
" 2 { 5 "	...	...	5	...	...	...	...	...
{ 16 "	27	2	13	42	123	9	1	133
" 3 { First 12	20	1	6	27	52	15	...	67
{ Last 5	23	1	9	33	8	4	...	12
" 4 { 5 "	35	...	1	36	...	...	...	...
{ 12 "	70	7	1	78	18	9	...	27
{ 22 "	75	6	5	86	...	...	...	...
" 5 { 18 "	154	26	4	184	21	7	...	23
{ 3 "	4	...	2	6	1	3	2	6
{ 1 "	1	...	...	1	6	...	...	6
150	683	43	60	786	349	70	3	422

familiarly spoken of, or addressed, in a rather restricted sense, as the covenant God of Israel. The use of *Elohim*, when coupled, as it frequently is, with a pronominal or other adjunct, as *my*, or *our* God, the God of Israel, &c., does not carry the sense further so as to preclude the idea of a merely national Deity; but when employed without any such addition, especially in combination with *Jehovah*, *Jehovah Elohim*, the *Lord God*, it implies the absolute supremacy of the God of Israel to the exclusion of every other, embodying the principle so beautifully enforced and illustrated in the eighth Psalm, that "*Jehovah our Lord*" is Creator and Lord of all. The distinctive use of the two names is strikingly exemplified in the nineteenth Psalm, in the opening of which, where the subject is the glory of God as displayed in the works of creation and providence, *Elohim* is used; but in the latter part, where the Psalmist expatiates on the excellency of the Divine law, and prays for his own preservation in the ways of the Lord, he employs the word *Jehovah* throughout.

It is this emphatic use of the name *Elohim* that characterizes so pre-eminently the Psalms of that class. "Partial representations of *Jehovah*," observes Hengstenberg, "a tendency to overlook the absolute in Him, was extremely natural to Israel, as polytheism prevailed all around." "The surrounding heathen and the heathenishly inclined in Israel itself recognized in *Jehovah* indeed the God of Israel, but not God absolutely, the possession of the whole fulness of the Godhead." The ground of the collocation *Jehovah Elohim* is always to be found in the opposition it presents against such partial representations, by which *Jehovah*, though in itself the higher appellation, became relatively the lower; so that it was elevated by the addition of *Elohim*, though strictly of inferior import.\* In this collocation the name *Elohim* stands upon the same line with *Zehaoth*, *God of hosts* or *worlds*. We are presented with a commentary on the *Jehovah Elohim* in the words in which David

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\* *Elohim*, from a root to *fear* or *revere*, signifies an object of reverence, and *El* mighty or powerful; both are applied to false deities as well as to the true God.

breaks forth after he had received the promise through Nathan, "Who am I, O *Lord God*, and what is my house that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O *Lord God*! but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come," &c. (2 Sam. vii. 18—29. 1 Chron. xvii. 16—27.) What Jehovah had done was so great, that it could not be attributed to a limited national God, and therefore he ascribes it to a God in whom the highest, the most personal individuality is combined with the largest infinitude. "But it was not necessary always expressly to name *Jehovah*, because He was the unquestionable property of Israel; it was only contested whether He was *Elohim*. *Elohim* by itself is therefore equivalent to *Jehovah Elohim*." "The *Elohim* is a soothing balsam which was dropped into the wound of the despondency of the people of God in the presence of the world. It was a shield held up against the assaults of despair in times of trouble. In this way is the *Elohim* in Psalm xlv. explained. In Psalm lx., *Elohim* is the battle-cry in the expedition against Edom. At every encroachment upon its boundaries, Israel must be awakened anew to the consciousness that *Jehovah* is *God Elohim*, but in the pressing emergencies also occasioned by domestic enemies, the soul flies to *Elohim*. When all on earth is leagued against it, when the waters rise even to the soul, it finds in this name a sure guerdon for deliverance, which represents its God as the One in whom the whole fulness of Godhead dwells, to whom therefore nothing is impossible, who is rich in resources. Thus David, in Psalm lii., sets *Elohim* over against Saul the hero, who was employing all instruments of evil for his destruction; and in like manner in a series of other Psalms belonging to the same period of persecution. (Psalms liv. to lix.) During Absalom's revolt also David retreats for refuge to *Elohim*. (Psalms xlii., xliii., lxi., and lxiii.) To this too, betakes the suffering righteous one, in Psalms lxix. and lxxi. The *Elohim* further is used in connexion with instructive facts that show that *Jehovah* is *God*, in such Psalms as celebrate the victory which Israel, the weak and little, 'the worm Jacob,' obtained over the heathen world, proudly boasting of their might. Thus, in

Psalms xli., where, in verses 7 and 11, *Jehovah Zebaoth*, (*Lord of hosts*), corresponds to the *Jehovah Elohim*; Psalm xlvii., where to the *Elohim* is added 'the Most High, a great King over all the earth;' and Psalm xlviii., where also compare the *Zebaoth* in v. 8. The *Elohim* stands likewise in Psalms which unfold the idea of the future supremacy of the God of Israel, the pledge of which is the fact that *Jehovah* is *Elohim*, (Psalms xlv., lxvii., lxviii., lxxii.) Psalm lxxv. praises God as the God of the whole world and nature. In Psalm li., David makes his complaint to *Elohim*, because, being plunged into the great deep of sinful conviction, he stood in need of the entire fulness of the Divine compassion. In Psalm l., the name *Elohim* is proclaimed with a voice of thunder to those, who, after the manner of the servants of a god, imagined that they could feed their God with their pitiful sacrifices; not reflecting that they had to do with the Lord of the whole world."—*Hengstenberg*, vol. iii., app., pp. 41—49. *Ab.*

As a natural result of the views which appear thus to have influenced the sacred writers in the use of the name, the *Elohim* Psalms are remarkable for their lively and elevated character, disclosing less of the feeling of calm devotion, quiet resignation, patient hope, or peaceful assurance, than the *Jehovah* Psalms; and more of vivid emotion, impassioned fervour, earnest supplication, or joyful and triumphant praise. Compare, for instance, the unruffled tranquillity with which Psalm cxix. pursues the even tenor of its way through the course of one-hundred-and-seventy-six verses, with the ardent aspirations, the plaintive cries, and the longing, glowing anticipations intermingled in the forty-second and forty-third; the deep contrition, and fervent prayers for pardoning mercy, of the fifty-first; or the tones of thrilling rapture of the forty-sixth and forty-seventh. These may be regarded as extreme examples, but they are characteristic of the respective classes to which they belong.

With respect to the more particular location of the Psalms within the general limits above indicated, many are found disposed in pairs, threes, or larger groups, having a mutual relation or resemblance in regard to their subjects or composition, the occasions on which they

were written, or for which they were designed, or the identity of their titles. Thus Psalms iii., iv., and v. form a triad of morning or evening hymns; Psalms ix. and x., xx. and xxi., xxxii. and xxxiii., ciii. and civ., cv. and cvi., are pairs, the second continuing the subject of the first, and sometimes commencing with its terminating words; Psalms xxxiv. and xxxv. are a pair, composed by David during the persecution by Saul, and both containing the expression, occurring nowhere else in the Psalms, *the angel of the Lord*; Psalms lvii., lviii., and lix. are three others composed during the Sauline persecution, and each bearing the title *Altaschith, Michtam of David*; Psalms l. and li. both declare the worthlessness of mere external sacrifices; Psalms lxxvii. and lxxviii. both conclude with the comparison of Israel to a flock of sheep; Psalm lxxxviii., and the latter part of Psalm lxxxix., the one inscribed *Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite*, and the other *Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite*, consist of the most plaintive and deeply mournful strains to be found in the whole Psalter; Psalms xlv., xlvii., and xlviii. are one continued note of triumphant praise; Psalms lxv., lxvi., and lxvii., each bearing the double appellation of psalm-song, are another trilogy of praise, forming a suitable introduction to the magnificent sixty-eighth; and the six Psalms, xcv. to c., are a continuous strain of joyful praise; Psalms liii., liv., and lv. are entitled *Maschil of David*, and the succeeding five, lvi.—lx., *Michtam of David*; the fifteen Psalms, cxx. to cxxxiv., constitute a distinct series, entitled *Songs of Degrees*; and the collection closes with five Hallelujah Psalms, each beginning and ending with "Praise ye the Lord."

A general view of the contents and arrangement of the whole Psalter is thus given by Jebb. (Vol. ii., p. 220.) "It appears sufficiently obvious that the first Psalm is introductory to the whole collection. It is equally evident that the second is also introductory to the Psalms in immediate sequence, and to a considerable part of the whole, which speak of conflicts with the enemies of God, the alternate repulses and victories, the complaints and thanksgivings, the hopes and fears of His servants. These struggles and vicissitudes form the main subject-matter of the two

earlier divisions or books of the Psalms, relieved occasionally by intervals of repose, as in the eighth and nineteenth, and by gleams of bright and inspiring prophecy. As we proceed, we find the fortunes of the Church more distinctly spoken of, in the Psalms of Asaph and Korah especially; her conquests and final triumph more confidently predicted, the reign of her Redeemer brought more distinctly into view, the history of God's past and future providence more systematically taught, the deliverance from captivity, and the bestowal of His grace more specially celebrated. Towards the end, in Psalm cxix., we have the calm meditations of experienced but watchful piety, matured into settled habits; and, from this Psalm onward, meditation ripens into thanksgiving, now uttered in a more confirmed and confident strain, till those which form the conclusion of the entire book are expressive of unmixed happiness and joy, the anticipation of the songs of Heaven. All conflicts are now over; the salvation of the righteous and destruction of the ungodly, announced in the first Psalm, are brought to pass; the triumph of Christ and of His servants, foretold in the second, is complete; the kings of the earth, who had stood up against the Lord, and against His anointed, are now bound in chains, and with links of iron; and the final and crowning sentiment of the whole is this: 'Praise God in his sanctuary, praise him in the firmament of his power. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.' In this general aspect of the Psalms we may read a threefold history. First, the fortunes of the Church; secondly, those of its antitype, the Church of Christ; and thirdly, the progress of each individual soul, from the conflicts with sin to her final triumph, and restoration to the presence of God her Creator. But just as it is ordained in the fortunes of the Church militant and of her individual members, this general progress towards perfection is chequered by many incidents, in all appearance anomalous and discouraging. Thus the interposition of Psalm cxl., and the three following ones, appears to retard the advance towards final victory, recurring to persecutions and perplexities which had seemingly passed away. In like manner checks will occur in the midst of the most prosperous current of a spiritual condition,

permitted or ordained in order that vigilance may be kept alive, and a perpetual dependence upon God alone for strength and protection."

### TITLES AND THEIR CONTENTS.

THE whole collection is entitled, in the Hebrew, *Tehillim, Praises*; but most of the Psalms individually have superscriptions or titles designating the character of the composition, pointing out its author, and frequently containing additional particulars respecting the occasion on which it was written, or for which it was designed, or the mode of its use in the temple service. Of the authenticity of these titles, as well as the interpretation of some portions of them, various opinions have been entertained; some expositors regarding them as an integral portion of the sacred text, and others rejecting their authority altogether; as Calmet, generally followed by Dr. Adam Clarke, who frequently assigns to the time of the captivity Psalms which the titles ascribe to David, and which contain nothing inconsistent with the earlier date. The great antiquity of the titles is proved by their existence, with some variations, in the Septuagint, and further by the fact that the authors of that version were so far at a loss as to the purport of some of the expressions they contain, as to give a translation often destitute of meaning. Dr. Kitto remarks that if the translators were Egyptian Jews, the remoteness of their location, producing a comparative unacquaintance with many matters respecting the devotional and musical services of the temple, may adequately account for this circumstance. We find, however, that a considerable amount of intercourse was kept up between the Jews in Palestine and their brethren in other countries, especially by the custom of many of the latter to visit Jerusalem at the great festivals; and, if the passages in question related to existing arrangements, it seems very improbable that they should have been so ignorant of their signification as appears to have been the case. In the instance of Psalm xviii., the correctness of the title is confirmed by a comparison with 2 Samuel, xxii., where a copy of the Psalm is



inserted in the history with the same superscription ; but which was the original remains undetermined, though the wording of it, especially the concluding clause, *and he said*, which we do not find in any other title, favours the supposition that it was adopted from the history by the compiler of the Psalms.

It is very probable that some of the titles were affixed by the authors of the Psalms themselves, being quite in accordance with the oriental manner of giving titles to pieces of poetry, or short, sententious compositions ; and, without claiming for them as a whole so high an authority as some have done, or placing implicit reliance upon them, it may be concluded that they were written by persons who, to say the least, had more valid ground for the statements they contain than those in the present day who impugn their authority, and substitute for them merely the result of their own conjectures.

A more particular notice of the historical references in the titles will be found in the introductory notes to the Psalms to which they are prefixed ; some other points, of a more general character, which they embrace, may be considered here under their several heads.

1. NAMES OR DESIGNATIONS.—The Psalms are designated in the titles by six different appellations ; *Tehillah*, *Song of Praise*, the Hebrew title of the whole book, occurs only once as a designation of a particular Psalm (cxlv.), “David’s” sublime and beautiful “Psalm of Praise,” “which,” says Bishop Patrick, “was always esteemed so excellent that the title of the whole book is taken from this.” It “is wholly spent in praising God, with such admirable devotion, that the ancient Hebrews were wont to say he could not fail to be a child of the world to come who would say this Psalm three times every day.” Preceding, as it does, the five Hallelujah Psalms, it forms a most appropriate commencement of that continuous hymn of thanksgiving which closes the book.

The most frequent designation is *Mizmor*, uniformly rendered *Psalm*, which in that exact form occurs only in the superscriptions ; but two words slightly varying in orthography, and of like import,

are found in a few other passages, and the verb from which all the three are derived is in its secondary signification of frequent use, but only in the Psalms, sometimes in connection with instrumental music, and, as well as the nouns derived from it, always in a religious sense. It is usually rendered *sing praises*, in a few instances *sing psalms*, or simply *sing*; but as the primary idea of the root is that of pruning or dressing a vineyard, *mizmor* may denote an ornate piece of composition, pruned of every redundancy, and arranged in poetic form for singing or music: or, as defined by Jebb, "a lyrical poem; its poetical structure being the prominent feature, but the musical accompaniment of vocal and instrumental modulation being always included as a secondary ingredient. The Greek language has happily and accurately rendered this word by *Psalmos*, which we have adopted in our word *Psalm*." *Mizmor* is prefixed to forty-four Psalms (Psalms iii., iv., v., vi., viii., ix., xii., xiii., xiv., xix., xx., xxiv., xxix., xxxi., xxxviii., xli., xlvii., xlix., l., li., lxii., lxiii., lxiv., lxxiii., lxxvii., lxxix., lxxx., lxxxii., lxxxiv., lxxxv., xcvi., c., ci., cix., cx., cxxxix., cxl., cxli., cxliii.), and to thirteen others (Psalms xxx., xlviii., lrv.—lxviii., lxxv., lxxvi., lxxxiii., lxxxvii., lxxxviii., xcii., cviii.), in combination with *Shir*, a Song. The latter term is applied also to Psalms xviii., xlv., xlv., and the fifteen "songs of degrees," (Psalms cxi.—cxxxiv.) It is the same as the verb *shir*, to *sing*; which being nearly identical in orthography with *shor*, to *see*, from whence is derived *mishor*, a *seer* or *prophet*, it has been suggested that *shir* may express the twofold idea of an *inspired song*; but this supposition is not confirmed by the ordinary usage of the word, which, on the contrary, is not, like *mizmor* and its cognate verb, restricted to sacred subjects, but is applied to song in the most general sense. Thus *mizmor*, being a specific term denoting a more finished composition, and as it appears confined, like our word *psalm* or *hymn*, to sacred themes, every *mizmor* would be comprehended in the general appellation of *shir*, though every *shir* would not necessarily be a *mizmor*, as in our own language every Psalm is a song, but every song is not a Psalm. The combination of these two words in the titles no doubt indicated some modification in the composition or arrangement of the Psalm, the

precise nature of which, or of the distinctive use of either of them separately, cannot now be determined; but as they are evidently intended when conjoined to qualify the sense one of the other, they should be rendered without the conjunction *and* or *or* interposed by our translators: *Mizmor Shir*, *Psalm Song*, or *Shir Mizmor*, *Song Psalm*. The name *Tephillah*, *Prayer*, is given to four Psalms (xvii., lxxxvi., xc., cii.), which are all of a deeply supplicatory character. Thirteen are denominated *Maschil* (Psalms \* xxxii., xlii., xlv., xlv., lii., liii., liv., lv., lxxiv., lxxviii., lxxxviii., lxxxix., cii.), and six *Michtam* (Psalms xvi., lvi.—lx.), of both which terms our translators retain the Hebrew form in the text, subjoining an explanation in the margin. The former, from the root *to teach*, may denote, agreeably to the marginal rendering, a didactic composition, or moral lesson. The sense of *Michtam* is not so readily determined. From its resemblance to a word sometimes used to denote gold, it has been interpreted as by our translators *golden*, and the six Psalms of David to which it is prefixed are supposed to have been written in letters of gold, and hung up in the sanctuary; but there seems nothing in their contents so extraordinary as to entitle them to such a pre-eminent distinction. The word appears to be formed from a verb signifying to *impress*, to *stain*, to *stamp*, or *engrave*; and is accordingly rendered by the Septuagint, a *pillar writing*, or *monumental inscription*; but it may be understood in a less literal sense, as a memorial or commemorative ode; which is very appropriate to the Psalms in question, four of them at least being, according to the statements in the titles, commemorative of particular events during the Sauline persecution. The seventh Psalm is called *Shiggaion*, on which see note there.

Some of the titles give the name of the author or other particulars, without any designation of the Psalm, as in the eleventh and thirteenth, where a *Psalm* is supplied by the translators. The number of those without any title, termed by the Talmudical writers *Orphan Psalms*, is in our English Bible thirty-four, (Psalms i., ii., x., xxxiii.,

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\* Of these the four first—xxxii., xlii., xlv., xlv., have *shir* also, and lii., liii., liv., lv., lxxiv., lxxviii., lxxxviii., have *mizmor shir*.

xlili., lxxi., xci., xciii.—xcvii., xcix., civ., cv., cvii., cxiv.—cxix., cxxvi., cxxvii.), and the Hallelujah Psalms, (cvi., cxi., cxii., cxiii., cxxv., cxlvi.—cl.); but the *Hallelujah* which our translators render as the commencement of these ten Psalms, *Praise ye the Lord*, is in most of the old versions placed as a title. The fact that most of these Psalms end with that expression, is, however, in favour of the conclusion that it was also designed to form their commencement.

2. AUTHORS.—The titles of one hundred Psalms contain names or appellatives, which, generally speaking, are no doubt those of their reputed authors; but the particle which precedes them, signifying either *of*, *to*, or *for*, and in the former sense admitting, like our English word, great latitude of meaning, may in some instances denote the persons for whom the Psalms were composed, or to whom they were consigned for arrangement or public use, rather than the author. One Psalm is ascribed to Moses (see on Psalm xc.); seventy-three to David; two to Solomon; twelve to Asaph; eleven to the sons of Korah (one of them also to Heman the Ezrahite); and one to Ethan the Ezrahite.

Assuming the possibility that David may not have been the author of all which bear his name,\* it can scarcely be doubted that he penned some of those which are anonymous,† so that about one half of the entire collection may be regarded as his composition; a circumstance in itself sufficient to give a tone and character to the whole book, independently of the influence which his example would naturally exercise upon succeeding writers. “From the variety of circum-

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\* They are Psalms iii.—ix., xi.—xxxii., xxxiv.—xli., li.—lxv., lxxviii.—lxx., lxxxvi., ci., ciii., cviii.—cx., cxxii., cxxiv., cxxxi., cxxxiii., cxxxviii.—cxlv.

† The first fifteen verses of Psalm cv., the whole of Psalm xvi., and the first and last two verses of Psalm cvi., all anonymous, are inserted in 1 Chronicles xvi. 7—36, as constituting a Psalm delivered by David into the hands of Asaph and his brethren. See notes at the Psalms. The second and ninety-fifth Psalms are quoted in the New Testament as David's (Acts iv. 25; Heb. iv. 7); but this may be only a general mode of citing from a book of which he was the chief author. The Seventy, however, who prefix titles to some which have none in the Hebrew, ascribe the ninety-fifth, as they do the ninety-sixth just referred to, to David.

stances and situations in which David was placed at different times, and the various affections which consequently were called into exercise, we may readily conceive that his style is exceedingly various. The remark indeed is applicable to the entire Book of Psalms, but eminently so to the Odes of David."—*T. H. Horne*. "The other composers of Psalms," remarks Hengstenberg, "only divide among themselves his riches. He embraces the whole territory of sacred lyrics, of which he was enabled, from his rich poetical gift, the varied events of his life, and the relations of his time, to take a full survey, and did not need to confine himself to any particular department. There is also peculiar to David a singular depth and liveliness of feeling, which manifests itself as well in the utterance of praise, the cry out of the depths, as in mirth on account of redemption, and more especially in the rapid transition from the one to the other. David, beyond doubt, gave the tone to the method so frequently adopted in the Psalms of suddenly and immediately interposing a word of Divine consolation. It is a consequence of the profound and very lively nature of his feelings, that David rises to greater elevation than all the other writers of Psalms (compare Psalms xviii., xxix., lxviii., cx., cxxxix.); yet on the other hand he had also a very peculiar faculty in adapting himself to the simple. It is also a consequence of the depth and freshness of feeling, that, as the consideration of the doctrinal matter of the Psalms will show, the Psalms of David are precisely those in which the greatest amount of instruction is contained. They are farther distinguished by the union of a child-like humility, such as reminds one of the unassuming shepherd youth, (*e. g.*, Psalms xxiii. and cxxxi.), with a heroic faith, the spirit of fortitude which, in its God, would spring over walls, and was not afraid of myriads of people that lay encamped round about him:—in which we again recognize the man of war, the hero David, the deforcer of the lion, and the conqueror of Goliath (compare, *e. g.*, Psalms iii., xviii., xxv., lx., lxviii.). Peculiar also is the strength of consciousness regarding the retributive righteousness of God, which had established itself during the period of the Sauline persecution, when David found in this more especially a shield against despair. Peculiar

yet again, that amid the straits of life, the oppression through godless enemies comes out so strongly, with whom David had to maintain so very hard a struggle. Then, a peculiar element was introduced into the psalmodic poetry of David by the promise given him through the prophet Nathan (See Psalms cxxxviii. and cxlv.; 2 Samuel vii.) Upon the ground of this promise David runs out into the future of his race, and accompanies it along its course of suffering, even to its final glorious issue."—*Hengstenberg*, vol. iii., app. 19.

As we are informed in 1 Kings iv. 32, that the Songs of Solomon were 1,005, it seems remarkable that only two Psalms, (lxxii and cxxvii.) bear his name, and whether as the author of the former is considered doubtful (see note there); but it is probable that some to which no name is attached may have been his composition.

The remaining names or appellatives prefixed to the Psalms are those of persons connected with the choral service of the sanctuary. The Levites, who officiated as singers and musicians, consisted of three choirs, according to the house of their fathers the three sons of Levi, Gershom, Kohath, and Merari, which were superintended respectively by the three chiefs or leaders, "whom David set over the service of song in the house of the Lord," Asaph, Heman, and Ethan or Jeduthun (1 Chron. vi. 31, 37, 39, 44; xv. 17; xvi. 5, 37, 41, 42; compare vi. 44, xvi. 41, 42); and their sons, "under the hand of their fathers," presided over the twenty-four courses, which formed the *élite* of the choral band; the four sons of Asaph presiding, one each, over the four courses of the Gershomites, (ch. xxv.) the fourteen sons of Heman over those of the Kohathites, and the six sons of Ethan over those of the Merarites. Though the choir of Asaph appears to have been the least in David's time, it is the only one mentioned as still subsisting after the captivity. (Neh. vii. 44).

The Psalms ascribed to Asaph are the fiftieth, and seventy-third to eighty-third. That some of David's singers were not merely reciters, but authors of Psalms, may be inferred, as already noticed, from the terms in which their services are described; and we read that on the purification of the temple by Hezekiah, the king "commanded the

Levites to sing praise unto the Lord, with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer." (2 Chron. xxix. 30.) There seems, therefore, no ground to question that some at least of the Psalms which bear his name were composed by Asaph himself; but as the contents of several of them indicate a later date, the words of the titles may be taken with some latitude of signification, importing in these instances, either that they were written by his descendants or successors in office, or committed to them, in addition to those of which he was the author, for public celebration. "The subjects of Asaph's Psalms are doctrinal or preceptive; their style, though less sweet than that of David, is much more vehement, and little inferior to the grandest parts of the prophecies of Isaiah and Habakkuk. The fiftieth Psalm in particular is characterized by such a deep vein of thought, and lofty tone of sentiment, as place him in the number of poets of the highest order."—*T.H. Horne*.

Psalms xlii. (of which xliii., without title, is evidently a continuation), xliv.—xlix., lxxxiv., lxxxv., lxxxvii., lxxxviii., are inscribed "of, to, or for, the sons of Korah." It is stated in Numbers xxvi. 11, that the children of Korah, who, with Dathan and Abiram, perished in the rebellion against Moses, were not, like those of his two associates, involved in the destruction of their father; and his descendants appear to have become so much more numerous than any other of the line of Kohath, that the Kohathite branch of the Levites are sometimes denominated, in reference to the temple services, Korhites. On the occasion of the fast proclaimed by king Jehoshaphat on the invasion of the Moabites and Ammonites, both names are specified: "The Levites of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel, with a loud voice on high." (2 Chron. xx. 19.) Heman, the chief of the Kohathite-choir, and whose two sons presided over the fourteen courses of which it was composed, was a descendant of Korah. (1 Chron. vi. '33—37.) The term *Sons of Korah* may therefore denote the Kohathite choir generally, or more specifically its leaders, Heman and his sons, or their descendants. Whether they are mentioned as the authors of the Psalms, or only as the persons to whom they were committed for public performance, has been considered doubtful.

Our translators, by rendering the Hebrew prefix *for* in the text, and placing *of* in the margin, signify a preference for the latter view ; it may, however, be accepted as in other cases in the former sense, especially as the term *Sons of Korah* does not present any chronological difficulty, by limiting the composition to one individual, or to any particular period ; whilst the diversity of style, as compared with that of other portions of the Psalter, indicates a difference of authorship. The forty-second Psalm, the first which bears their name, has generally been ascribed to David on his flight from Absalom, and appears remarkably to coincide with his situation on that sorrowful occasion ; but this is a matter of opinion and conjecture rather than fact, and is not perhaps of sufficient weight to set aside the Korahite origin of the Psalm. Both these views, however, are combined and reconciled in that taken by Hengstenberg, who considers that the Psalm discloses, indeed, the circumstances and feelings of David, but delineated by the sons of Korah ; that the “Korahites sang from the bosom of David :” and if they were the companions of his exile, sympathizing in his afflictions, and qualified to enter into his varied emotions, they may have been able to pourtray them with the force and vividness for which the Psalm is so remarkable. “With the family of the Korahites,” observes Hengstenberg, “David had appeared at an early period in close connection. In 1 Chronicles xii. 1, &c., the valiant men are mentioned, who, before the death of Saul, came to Ziklag, to participate with David in his troubles, and espouse his cause :—first, certain of the tribe of Benjamin, then five Korahites, (verse 6) and among them Azareel, who reappears in chapter xxv. 18 (compare verse 4), among the sons of Heman. From the companions of the conflict came latterly companions in the composition of sacred song ; but the band which joined itself to David was perpetually the same, that of those who were associated in faith toward the God of Israel,” (vol. iii., app. 21). “The Korahite Psalms,” remarks T. H. Horne, “are some of the most exquisite of all the lyric compositions which the book of Psalms contains.” Several of them have been already referred to as exemplifying the lively and elevated character of the Elohim Psalms.



The title of Psalm lxxxviii., the last of the Korahite Psalms, concludes with the words, "Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite;" and the next (lxxxix.) is entitled, "Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite." The meaning of the designation Ezrahite cannot with certainty be determined, but it seems most probable that the persons thus designated were the leaders of two of the choirs above mentioned. Heman, who appears to have been a grandson of Samuel the prophet (1 Chron. vi. 33—35, compare 1 Sam. i. ii.; 1 Chron. xxv. 5), is called "the king's seer in the words (or matters) of God;" and as he was a Korahite there is no incongruity in the supposition that both parts of the title of Psalm lxxxviii. indicate authorship; the first assigning it in general terms to the sons of Korah, and the last to one of them as the individual composer. The only difficulty in ascribing the eighty-ninth Psalm to Ethan or Jeduthun, the leader of the choir of the Merarites, is the evidence supposed to be afforded by its contents of a later date; but this can hardly be regarded as conclusive.—See notes on Psalms lxxxviii. and lxxxix.

The name of Jeduthun occurs in the titles of Psalms xxxix., lxii., and lxxvii., but apparently not as their author. The thirty-ninth, as well as the sixty-second, is "a Psalm of David," and in the former case Jeduthun may be mentioned as "the chief musician" to whom it is inscribed; but in the sixty-second and seventy-seventh the preposition being not *to* but *upon*, seems rather to indicate a musical instrument invented by, or named after, him; and this supposition is strengthened by the circumstance that one of them (the seventy-seventh) is "a Psalm of Asaph," and therefore not appropriate to Jeduthun's choir, though the instrument might be adopted by all.—See notes on Psalms xxxix., lxii., lxxvii.

3. MUSICAL INSCRIPTIONS.—Fifty-five Psalms are inscribed *Lamnatzah*, "To the chief musician." The root from which the Hebrew word is formed signifies to superintend or preside, and the correctness of the rendering given by our translators is proved by its use in a similar connexion in 1 Chron. xv. 21, where Mattithiah and others are said to have been appointed "with harps on the Sheminith to excel," or rather, as in the margin, "to oversee" or

preside. *Sheminith*, which in the passage just quoted is evidently a musical term, occurs also in the inscription, "to the chief musician," of Psalms vi. and xii.; and *Neginoth*, which is found in connexion with *Sheminith* in the title of Psalm vi., and separately in those of Psalms iv., liv., lv., and several others, is proved by its use in other parts of Scripture to be of like import, as is *Alamoth* in the title of Psalm xlv., compared with 1 Chron. xv. 20. The general sense of these terms being thus ascertained, it may be fairly inferred that others, which in like manner stand in connexion with the formula—*To the chief musician upon*—indicate also the particular instrument or mode of performance in the choral service; though, from the obscurity of their etymology, and their non-occurrence elsewhere, the precise import of many of these cannot now be determined. The attempts which have been made by some expositors to extract from them an enigmatical or mystical reference to the subject of the Psalm have only resulted in a variety of fanciful and useless conjectures. These, and some other expressions occasionally used in the titles, are more particularly noticed where they occur.

### THE WORD *SELAH*.

THE signification of this word, which is found interspersed in thirty-nine Psalms, and retained in our Bibles untranslated, has been the subject of much discussion. By some it has been considered equivalent to *Amen—So be it*; or to *Nota bene*, claiming particular attention to the preceding words; or, as the Chaldee paraphrase renders it, *For ever*; but the more general and probable opinion is that it is a musical note, indicating a pause or change in the modulation. This view is confirmed by the Septuagint rendering, *Diapsalma*, that is, *rest or change of song*; also by the fact that most of the Psalms in which *Selah* is inserted are inscribed to the chief musician; and by its occurrence in the prayer of Habakkuk (ch. iii.), which likewise has a musical inscription. As, however, this pause or change would naturally be made to coincide with a change (more or less marked), in the sense, the insertion of the *Selah* will be found to have an important relation to the subject-matter of the Psalm, indicating a

transition or turn of thought, and thus separating the exordium and the conclusion from the main body of the Psalm, or dividing it into several stanzas, parallel or progressive in expression or sentiment. This use of *Selah* is very ably and copiously illustrated by Jebb, in his "Dissertation on the Word;" and the following Psalms, with the introductory notes upon them, may be referred to as striking exemplifications of it: Psalms iii., xxxii., xxxix., xlv., lxii., lxvi., lxxviii., lxxxix., and xlvii. (See next page.)

#### POETICAL CHARACTER OF THE PSALMS.

THE language of the Psalms is concise and sententious, but at the same time, rich and varied; abounding with the graces and elegancies of poetic diction, and copiously adorned with appropriate and diversified imagery; sometimes expanding into surpassing grandeur, or rising to the loftiest height of sublimity. In its formal structure it presents examples of all the four species of parallelism under which Hebrew poetry is usually classified. A prevailing form is that which has been termed the *synonymous* or *cognate*, but now more generally the *gradational parallel*; disposed sometimes in verses of three or four lines, but usually in couplets, of which the second line responds to the preceding one, by expressing nearly the same sense in different language, and very frequently with a gradation or heightening of the sentiment: thus Psalm xxi.—

- 1 "The King shall joy in thy strength, O Lord;  
And in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!
- 2 Thou hast given him his heart's desire,  
And hast not withholden the request of his lips.
- 3 For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness:  
Thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.
- 4 He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him,  
Even length of days for ever and ever." &c., &c.

The gradation is frequently found not only between line and line, but between one stanza and another; the several divisions of which the Psalm consists exhibiting a like progression in moral sentiment or intensity of feeling. Of this the forty-seventh affords an illustration, "in which," remarks Jebb, "the latter division forms a noble

gradation and shows an advance in the action of the poem. The first part contains an exhortation to the inhabitants of the earth to praise the Almighty as their God and King ; and His special benefits to His chosen people are predicted : "

- 1 " O clap your hands, all ye people ;  
Shout unto God with the voice of triumph.
- 2 For the Lord most high is terrible ;  
He is a great King over all the earth.
- 3 He shall subdue the people under us,  
And the nations under our feet.
- 4 He shall choose our inheritance for us,  
The excellency of Jacob whom he loved. Selah."

"In the second part, God is represented as sitting on the throne, not of conquest, but of holiness. The Gentiles are no longer captive, but are joined to the people of the God of Abraham, adopted into their family, and sharing their privileges."

- 5 " God is gone up with a shout,  
The Lord with the sound of a trumpet.
- 6 Sing praises to God, sing praises :  
Sing praises unto our King, sing praises.
- 7 For God is the King of all the earth :  
Sing ye praises with understanding.
- 8 God reigneth over the heathen :  
God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.\*
- 9 The princes of the peoples are gathered to the people of the God  
of Abraham :  
For the shields of the earth belong unto God: he is greatly  
exalted."

The *antithetic parallel*, so characteristic of the Book of Proverbs, in which the responsive line contrasts with the preceding, occurs but sparingly in the Psalms. The twentieth has two couplets of this kind:—

- 7 " Some trust in chariots, and some in horses :  
But we will remember the name of the Lord our God.
- 8 They are brought down and fallen :  
But we are risen, and stand upright."

In the following verses from Psalm xxxvii., the antithesis is not between line and line, but between couplet and couplet.

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\* See notes on this Psalm.

- 35 "I have seen the wicked in great power,  
And spreading himself like a green bay tree.  
36 But he passed away, and, lo, he was not :  
Yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.  
37 Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright :  
For the end of that man is peace.  
38 But the transgressors shall be destroyed together :  
The end of the wicked shall be cut off."

The *synthetic* or *constructive parallel*, which consists in a certain analogy and correspondence between one line and another in sentiment and structure, is of frequent occurrence. It is very diversified in arrangement, and embraces all which do not range under either of the preceding heads, the parallelism being in some cases much less exact and apparent than in others. Of this kind the nineteenth Psalm affords a striking and beautiful illustration.

- 7 "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul :  
The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.  
8 The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart :  
The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.  
9 The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever :  
The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.  
10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold :  
Sweeter also than honey, even the droppings of the comb." \*

Sometimes the lines are bi-membral, each consisting of two propositions or sentiments, as Psalm cxliv. 5, 6—

- "Bow thy heavens, O Lord, and come down :  
Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.  
Cast forth lightnings, and scatter them :  
Shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them."

Sometimes they range in couplets, the first line of each answering to one another, and the second in like manner, thus forming stanzas of alternating parallels; *e.g.*, Psalm ciii. 11—13, consisting of three couplets of beautiful similitudes, illustrative of the mercy, forgiveness, and lovingkindness of God :—

- "For as the heaven is high above the earth,  
So great is his mercy toward them that fear him.  
As far as the east is from the west,

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\* See note on this verse.

So far hath he removed our transgressions from us.  
 Like as a father pitieth his children,  
 So the Lord pitieth them that fear him."

Psalm cxliii. 8—10 presents four couplets of a like kind, the first line of each containing a petition, followed by a shorter line stating the ground on which it is based.

"Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning ;  
 For in thee do I trust :  
 Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk ;  
 For I lift up my soul unto thee.  
 Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies :  
 I flee unto thee to hide me.  
 Teach me to do thy will ;  
 For thou art my God."

Few Psalms will be found to consist exclusively of any one kind of parallel, but most of them of the gradational and synthetic combined, presenting in their structure and mode of arrangement a pleasing and almost endless variety ; and sometimes forming what is designated as the fourth class, viz :—The *introverted parallel*, or *epanodos* ; which, being entirely one of arrangement, may be formed of either of the three preceding classes separately or combined.\* It consists of four or more lines or couplets, so placed that the first is parallel with the last, the second with the last but one, and so throughout in an inverted order, whatever be the length of the stanza, the two central ones always answering to each other ; thus Psalm cxxxv. 15—18 :—

"The idols of the heathen are silver and gold,  
 The work of men's hands.  
 They have mouths, but they speak not ;  
 Eyes have they, but they see not ;  
 They have ears, but they hear not ;  
 Neither is there any breath in their mouths.  
 They that make them are like unto them :  
 So is every one that trusteth in them."

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\* This remark will apply to the variations in arrangement just noticed, though the examples given belong to the third class ; and to others which are found to occur.

“The parallelisms here marked out,” remarks Bishop Jebb, “will, it is presumed, be found accurate. In the first line we have the idolatrous heathen, (rather the idols of the heathen), in the eighth, those who put their trust in idols ; in the second line the fabrication, in the, seventh the fabricators ; in the third line mouths without articulation, in the sixth, mouths without breath ; in the fourth line eyes without vision, and in the fifth, ears without the sense of hearing.”  
— *Sacred Literature*, p. 57.

Another illustration is furnished by Psalm lxxxiv. 5—7 :—

“Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee ;  
The passengers in whose heart are the ways.  
In the valley of Baca make it a spring,  
The rain also filleth the pools :  
They go from strength to strength.  
He shall appear before God in Zion.”

Here the first and last lines declare the blessedness of the man whose strength is in God, and his appearance before Him in Zion ; the second and fifth, the earnest resolution to pursue the journey, and its progress from stage to stage ; and the third and fourth, the privations or refreshments by the way. (See the notes on this passage). The introverted form may sometimes be traced through a succession of verses or a whole Psalm, the parallel lines being more numerous, and not always alike in number. Thus, in the first division of Psalm xlviii. verses 1—8, the opening and concluding lines portray the beauty and security of Zion under the Divine protection, and the intermediate ones the discomfiture of her assailants.

“Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised,  
In the city of our God, the mountain of his holiness.  
Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole land, is mount Zion.  
On her north side is the city of the great King.  
God is known in her palaces for a refuge.  
For lo ! the kings were assembled,  
They passed by together ;  
They saw, and so they marvelled ;  
They were troubled, they hasted away :

Fear took hold upon them there,  
Pain, as of a woman in travail.  
Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.  
As we have heard, so have we seen,  
In the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God ;  
God will establish it for ever. Selah."

The topic which forms the commencement and conclusion of the first division is dwelt and enlarged upon in the corresponding portions of the second, v. 9—14, the intermediate lines being occupied with a more particular survey of Zion, to witness the evidences of her security and beauty.

"We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple ;  
According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth ;  
Thy right hand is full of righteousness.  
Let Mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad,  
Because of thy judgments.  
Walk about Zion, and go round about her ;  
Tell the towers thereof ;  
Mark ye well her bulwarks ;  
Consider her palaces ;  
That ye may tell it to the generation following :  
For this God is our God for ever and ever ;  
He will be our guide, even unto death."

So in Psalm lxxviii. 21—31, the commencing and terminating topic is the wrath of God for the murmuring and disbelief of his people, while the intermediate verses describe his miraculous power and providential care, manifested for the supply of their wants :—

"Therefore the Lord heard, and was wroth ;  
So a fire was kindled against Jacob,  
And anger also came up against Israel ;  
Because they believed not in God,  
And trusted not in his salvation :  
Though he had commanded the clouds from above,  
And opened the doors of heaven ;  
And had rained down manna upon them to eat,  
And had given them of the corn of heaven.  
Man did eat angels' food,  
He sent them meat to the full.



He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven,  
 And by his power he brought in the south wind.  
 He rained flesh also upon them as dust,  
 And feathered fowls as the sand of the sea :  
 And he let it fall in the midst of their camp,  
 Round about their habitations.  
 So they did eat and were well filled,  
 For he gave them their own desire ;  
 They were not estranged from their lust :  
 But while their meat was yet in their mouths,  
 The wrath of God came upon them,  
 And slew the fattest of them,  
 And smote down the chosen men of Israel."

The whole of the short but beautiful Psalm lxxvii. may be suitably arranged in this form :—

" God be merciful unto us, and bless us,  
 And cause his face to shine upon us :  
 That thy way may be known upon earth,  
 Thy saving health among all nations.  
 Let the people praise thee, O God !  
 Let all the people praise thee :  
 O let the nations be glad and sing for joy,  
 For thou shalt judge the people righteously  
 And govern the nations upon earth :  
 Let the people praise thee, O God !  
 Let all the people praise thee :  
 Then shall the earth yield her increase,  
 And God, even our own God, shall bless us :  
 God shall bless us,  
 And all the ends of the earth shall fear him."

Another example is furnished by the much larger and magnificent Psalm civ., as remarked in the notes there, according to which the arrangement is as follows :—

V. 1. The exordium in which the Psalmist enjoins his soul to praise the Lord, and proposes as his theme the honour and majesty of God as developed :—

V. 2 to 5, in the creation of light, the expansion of the firmament, the distribution and service of the elements, and the establishment of the world.

V. 6 to 9, in the separation of the waters from the land.

V. 10 to 12, in the watering of the valleys by springs.

V. 13 to 17, and of the hills and the earth generally by rains, for the sustenance of man and beast.

V. 18 forms the centre of the poem, and point of transition by which the Psalmist ascends from the high hills,

V. 19 to 23, to the sun and moon, and their relation to and influence upon man and beast. He then descends,

V. 24 to 26, to the sea and its inhabitants and passengers : in

V. 27 to 30 declares the continual providence of God over all His works ; and in

V. 31 to 34, closes the development of his theme by declaring the everlasting glory of God, and sovereignty over His works, and his own determination to praise, meditate upon, and rejoice in Him.

V. 35. In conclusion, he declares the transitory prosperity of the wicked, again enjoins his soul to bless the Lord, and exhorts all to join in the song of praise.

V. 1. "Bless the Lord, O my soul.

O Lord, my God, thou art very great ;  
Thou art clothed with honour and majesty.

2—5. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment ;  
Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain ;  
Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters ;  
Who maketh the clouds his chariot ;  
Who walketh upon the wings of the wind ;  
Who maketh his angels spirits,  
His ministers a flaming fire ;  
Who laid the foundations of the earth,  
That it should not be removed for ever.

6—9. Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment ;  
The waters stood above the mountains.  
At thy rebuke they fled,  
At the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.  
They go up by the mountains,  
They go down by the valleys,  
Unto the place which thou hast founded for them.  
Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over,  
That they turn not again to cover the earth.

- 10—12. He sendeth the springs into the valleys,  
Which run among the hills.  
They give drink to every beast of the field ;  
The wild asses quench their thirst.  
By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation,  
Which sing among the branches.
- 13—17. He watereth the hills from his chambers ;  
The earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.  
He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle,  
And herb for the service of man ;  
That he may bring forth food out of the earth,  
And wine that maketh glad the heart of man,  
And oil to make his face to shine,  
And bread which strengtheneth man's heart.  
The trees of the Lord are full of sap,  
The cedars of Lebanon which he hath planted ;  
Where the birds make their nests ;  
As for the stork, the fir trees are her house.
18. The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats,  
And the rocks for the conies.
- 19—23. He appointed the moon for seasons,  
The sun knoweth his going down.  
Thou makest darkness, and it is night,  
Wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.  
The young lions roar after their prey,  
And seek their meat from God ;  
The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together,  
And lay them down in their dens.  
Man goeth forth unto his work,  
And to his labour, until the evening.
- 24—26. O ! Lord, how manifold are thy works !  
In wisdom hast thou made them all.  
The earth is full of thy riches ;  
So is this great and wide sea,  
Wherein are things creeping innumerable,  
Both small and great beasts.  
There go the ships :  
There is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein.
- 27—30. These all wait upon thee  
That thou mayest give them their meat in due season.  
That thou givest them they gather ;  
Thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good ;  
Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled ;

Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created;  
And thou renewest the face of the earth.

31—34. The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever ;

The Lord shall rejoice in his works.

He looketh on the earth and it trembleth,

He toucheth the hills and they smoke.

I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live,

I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.

My meditation of him shall be sweet ;

I will be glad in the Lord.

35. Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth,

And let the wicked be no more.

Bless thou the Lord, O my soul !

Praise ye the Lord."

Seven Psalms, viz. : xxv., xxxiv., xxxvii., cxi., cxii., cxix., and cxlv. are of the acrostic or alphabetic form ; consisting (with some occasional deviations) of twenty-two lines, verses, or sets of verses, of which the initial letters succeed each other in alphabetic order. This characteristic is necessarily lost in translation, except that in Psalm cxix., the divisions are in our Bibles severally headed with the name of the letter which in the original is the initial of every verse. (See the notes on those Psalms.)

#### MESSIANIC INTERPRETATION OF THE PSALMS. IMPRE- CATORY PSALMS. DOCTRINE OF A FUTURE STATE.

THAT portions of the book of Psalms have a more or less direct relation to Christ is evinced by his own declaration, (Luke xxiv. 44,) and by the application of various passages, both by Himself and His apostles. Several Psalms, indeed, seem scarcely to admit of any other interpretation ; and, together with particular passages in others, may be regarded as directly prophetic of His character and offices, His sufferings, humiliation, and exaltation.

Some of the passages thus cited and applied in the New Testament, with many others, especially those which commemorate the Divine

promises to David and his posterity, may be viewed in their immediate and literal import as referring to the writers themselves, and the circumstances of their own times ; and also in a more spiritual and figurative sense as descriptive of the person of the Messiah, and the establishment and extension of His kingdom in the earth.

This is entirely in harmony with other prophetic writings of the Old Testament, and with the typical character of that dispensation which was a shadow of good things to come ; but many expositors have carried these views, in various degrees, much farther ; some giving an exclusively or principally Messianic interpretation to many entire Psalms, especially those which contain any verses so cited and applied in the New Testament, whether the rest of the Psalm be appropriate to the subject or not ; and others assigning a figurative or mystical character to the whole collection. Bishop Horsley, who adopts to the fullest extent this system of interpretation, remarks (*Preface to Translation*, page 10) : “ It is true that many of the Psalms are commemorative of the miraculous interpositions of God in behalf of the chosen people ; for indeed the history of the Jews is a fundamental part of revealed religion. Many were probably composed upon the occasion of remarkable passages in David’s life, his dangers, his afflictions, his deliverances. But of those which relate to the public history of the natural Israel, there are few in which the fortunes of the mystical Israel, the Christian Church, are not adumbrated ; and of those which allude to the life of David there are none in which the Son of David is not the principal and immediate subject. David’s complaints against his enemies are Messiah’s complaints, first, of the unbelieving Jews, then of the heathen persecutors, and the apostate faction in later ages. David’s afflictions are the Messiah’s sufferings. David’s penitential supplications are the supplications of Messiah in agony under the burden of the imputed guilt of man. David’s songs of triumph and thanksgiving are Messiah’s songs of triumph and thanksgiving for his victory over sin and death and hell.” “ A very great, I believe the far greater, part,” the same writer further observes, “ are a sort of dramatic ode, consisting of dialogues between persons sustaining certain characters.

The persons are frequently the Psalmist himself, or the chorus of priests and Levites, or the leader of the Levitical band, opening the ode with a proem declarative of the subject, and very often closing the whole with a solemn admonition, drawn from what the other persons say. The other persons are Jehovah, sometimes as one, sometimes as another of the three Persons: Christ, in His incarnate state, sometimes before, sometimes after His resurrection; the human soul of Christ, as distinguished from His divine essence. Christ in His incarnate state is personated sometimes as a priest, sometimes as a king, sometimes as a conqueror." "It is not," he adds, "a bad general notion of the Book of Psalms, that the whole collection forms a sort of heroic tragedy. The redemption of Man and the destruction of Satan is the plot. The persons of the drama are the persons of the Godhead, Christ united to one of them, Satan, Judas, the apostate Jews, the heathen persecutors, the apostates of latter times; the attendants, believers, unbelievers, angels; the scenes, heaven, earth, hell; the time of the action, from the fall to the final overthrow of the apostate faction, and the general judgment."

Without attempting to define the precise limits of Messianic interpretation, there is in the extreme view of it here enunciated ground for serious objection, not only as leading to a fanciful rather than a practical exposition of this portion of divine revelation, but also in the unsuitable application of many particular passages to Christ. Those especially which involve expressions of penitence and confession of sin are obviously incompatible in a personal sense with the sinless character of the Redeemer, as uniformly exhibited in Scripture; and the application of them to Him, in His vicarious character, is one for which we have no precedent in the inspired writers themselves, and appears to be a diversion of them from their genuine meaning and legitimate use, the expression of the wants and feelings of the Church, and of its individual members.\*

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\* Some further remarks on this subject will be found in the notes on several Psalms: see particularly on Psalms xxii. and xl.

A difficulty has been presented to the minds of many readers by passages in the Psalms of an imprecatory nature, which appear to breathe a spirit of revenge towards enemies, and of joy and exultation in the prospect of their destruction or punishment, inconsistent with that principle of forgiveness which is inculcated in many parts, not only of the New but also of the Old Testament. "A circumstance," observes Dr. Kitto, "which increases the perplexity is, that the imprecation is often found in close connection with language which indicates the firmest trust in God, or a high state of devotional feeling." (*Bible Illustrations, Poetical Books*, p. 309.) On this subject, Bishop Horne remarks, "The offence taken at the supposed uncharitable and vindictive spirit of the imprecations which occur in some of the Psalms ceases immediately if we change the imperative for the future, and read, not '*Let them be confounded*,' &c., but '*They shall be confounded*,' &c., of which the Hebrew is equally capable,"—"and, indeed, to cut off all occasion from them that desire it, the original verbs should be uniformly so translated." "Such passages will then have no more difficulty in them than the other frequent predictions of divine vengeance in the writings of the prophets, or denunciations of it in the Gospels, intended to warn, to alarm; and to lead sinners to repentance, that they may fly from the wrath to come." (*Preface to Commentary*, and on Psalm v. 11.) The fact, however, as regards the grammatical bearings of the question is, in the above extract, greatly overstated: for although in a few instances our translation may present a more repulsive aspect than the original, and in some others the verbs may with equal or greater propriety be rendered in the future instead of the imperative form, yet this can apply only to those in the third person, in which the Hebrew form of the imperative is identical with the future indicative, whilst in the second person the distinction is as clearly defined as in our own language; and, in passages extending through a series of verses of like import, in which some verbs of the second person imperative are alternated or combined with others in the third person, the unequivocal sense of the former is sufficient to establish the character of the whole, and to justify, if not to require, that all the

verbs be rendered alike in the imperative form. But even were the alteration admissible to the full extent for which the good Bishop contends, its importance, when duly estimated, will perhaps not be found so great as may at first sight have appeared ; for it is evident, from the general scope of such passages, that the mind of the Psalmist accords with the words he utters ; and the whole question mainly resolves itself into the one point, whether his feelings are to be regarded as those of personal resentment, or pious recognition of the righteous judgment of God ; and in the latter case it is of little moment whether that recognition be expressed in the form of a prediction that the divine purpose shall be accomplished, or a prayer that it may be so. (See Notes on Psalms xxxv. 5, 6 ; liv. 7 ; lix. 10 ; lv. 15 ; and on the latter, p. 46.) “The wish for divine judgment on ungodly wickedness,” remarks Hengstenberg, “can be considered as objectionable, only if we are prepared to deny this judgment itself, in manifest contradiction to the New, no less than to the Old Testament.”—*Hengstenberg*, on Psalm lxix. 22.

In some of the passages now under consideration, where the language is of a general character, and not indicative of injury sustained by the writer himself, it is nothing more than the spontaneous utterance of that feeling implanted in the human breast, which bursts forth with indignation at the perpetration of outrage and wrong ; with compassion towards the injured and oppressed, and a sense of justice to be inflicted on the evil doer, in accordance with the divine economy as developed in the inspired volume, and often manifested in God's providential dealings with mankind. In some other instances, in which the reference is more personal, the Psalmist simply prays that the malicious designs of his enemies may be frustrated, and that he may be delivered from their evil machinations, against which in any view of the case no reasonable objection can be urged. With respect to those in which he goes further and supplicates for vengeance upon his enemies, so far as any personal vindictive feeling may be involved, it should be regarded as belonging to a dispensation in which the great duty of forgiveness was not enjoined in the same decisive and emphatic manner as it is



both by example and precept under that of the Gospel. That David, however, who probably penned most of the psalms in question, practised this virtue in an eminent degree, the records of his life which have been transmitted to us afford abundant proof. On one occasion, indeed, when provoked by the brutish conduct of Nabal, his ardent feelings of resentment were likely to have betrayed him into a deed of violence and blood, had it not, as he afterwards acknowledged with gratitude to the good providence of God, been averted by the prudent and timely intervention of Abigail; but the whole course of his conduct towards his bitter and implacable enemy and persecutor Saul, and his family, as well as towards those who were concerned in the rebellion of Absalom, is characterized most remarkably by the entire opposite of a revengeful spirit, under the most trying circumstances. In Psalm vii. 4 (see note there) he deprecates in the strongest terms the indulgence of such a feeling, and "a memorial of his noble spirit," says Hengstenberg, "as abhorring anything like revenge, exists to this day in his lamentation upon Saul's death (2 Samuel i.) He who could speak so of a fallen enemy, an enemy that had for years sought his life, and inflicted wounds in his soul which were never properly healed again, could certainly not regard himself as having the privilege of revenge, and could least of all express this in songs which he sang before God, and destined for use in the sanctuary." (Psalm lxxi. 8.)

Yet strongly as David might disclaim in his personal conduct the exercise of the *lex talionis*, he entertained a lively and abiding sense of the retributive righteousness of God as an integral part of His moral government of the world, and firm faith in its ultimate vindication and accomplishment; and when seated on the throne by the express appointment of the Almighty, as the sovereign of a nation privileged to be the sole depository of divine truth, his enemies and those of his people, were also the enemies of God and His anointed, and of His Church on earth. These considerations, with that of the acknowledged character of the Psalms as inspired compositions, lead to the conclusion that, in such passages as have been referred to, the writer should be regarded not as utter-

ing feelings of personal resentment, but rather as representing a righteous sufferer, appealing to the Deity to vindicate His sacred attributes in the punishment of impenitent transgressors ; a doctrine in entire harmony with every portion of the sacred volume.

“ We shall arrive still more determinately at the same result,” continues the writer just quoted, “ if we take into account the motives which prompted the sacred bards in their prayers for revenge, or the consequences which they expected to arise from such prayers being answered. They wished and hoped that the stumbling-block which the prosperity of the wicked occasions to faith, and the encouragement which it gives to wickedness, might be taken away ; that God would vindicate His endangered honour ; that He would manifest His greatness and His righteousness, and thereby awaken the apprehension of these in the minds of believers, and call the world at large to repentance. That by the overthrow of the bitter enemies of His Church, He sought to have the Church delivered from destruction, and along therewith the only party qualified to honour Him, and all the spiritual goods He had committed to her, appears from Psalm lxxix. 6 : ‘ Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee,’ &c., where, according to the connection, ‘ For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling-place,’ by the heathen are to be understood the people who had raged against Israel, and whose destruction was the condition of Israel’s salvation ; not the heathen world generally, for which the Psalmists bore a tender love, and whose reception one day into the kingdom and blessing of God they wistfully anticipated.”\* (Psalm xxi.)

Closely connected with these considerations is that of the standing-point of the Psalms in regard to the doctrine of a future state, for the passages in question in unison with the promises and threatenings under the legal dispensation, referring simply to the temporal punishment or destruction of those against whom they are uttered, although the principle involved is in both cases the same, are not to

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\* See notes on Psalms lviii. 10 ; lxi. 28 ; and Psalm cix., introductory note.

be regarded as invested, in the mind of the sacred writers, with the same awful character as they assume when viewed in the aspect under which this subject is presented to us in the pages of the New Testament. We may there find indeed on several occasions expressions analogous to some of the imprecations in the Psalms, directed against the opposers of the apostles in their gospel mission, as the words of Peter to Simon Magus (Acts viii. 20), and those of Paul respecting Alexander the coppersmith (2 Tim. iv. 14), and it is equally true that the divine judgment upon the hardened and impenitent, so far from losing any of its rigour under the new covenant, acquires additional force and intensity. "He that despised Moses' law," says the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, "died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace?" (Heb. x. 28, 29; see also xii. 25—29.) Yet with the aggravated punishment denounced against those who despise and reject the richer means of grace, the desire to reclaim is also brought more prominently into view—thus, in the instance of Simon Magus, an exhortation to repentance in the hope of forgiveness is annexed, and instead of the death sentence of the law, "that soul shall be cut off from his people," we find the apostle enjoining the Corinthians, in the case of a grievous offender, "to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh;" or, as the words may import, to separate from church fellowship for the punishment of the flesh, or the destruction of his fleshly lusts; "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. v. 5); and in a subsequent epistle, when the "punishment" has proved "sufficient" to produce the requisite contrition, he counsels them "to forgive him and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow"\* (2 Cor. ii. 6, 7.)

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\* I am aware that commentators differ as to the precise meaning of the terms here used, and whether any personal chastisement, beyond that of

The entire absence of any allusion to a hereafter, in many passages of the Psalms, where the contemplation of death seems naturally, and almost unavoidably to lead to the subject, cannot fail to strike the attentive reader, and the glimpses of it which some others appear to disclose are derived rather from the interpretation and application of them under the light of the Gospel, than from the clear and inherent sense of the terms employed; presenting a remarkable contrast to the continual allusions and unequivocal declarations on the subject, which meet us in the perusal of the New Testament.

One or two words, the use of which has an important bearing upon this point, may claim a little special notice. The word *soul*, by which, in accordance with the general usage of the New Testament, we are accustomed to denote a spiritual existence distinct from the body, has in the Old Testament a very wide range of signification. The corresponding Hebrew term, *něphěsh*, designates, in the narrative of the Creation, the vital principle, either in man or the inferior animals. Thus in the first chapter of Genesis we read: "And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life;" in the Hebrew, "the moving *soul* living." (v. 20). "And God created great whales, and every living creature (Heb., every living *soul*) that moveth." (v. 21.) "And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature (Heb., living *soul*) after his kind." (v. 24.) And again, "To every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life (Heb., wherein there is a *living soul*) I have given every green herb for meat." (v. 30.) In the next chapter the same terms are used in respect to man, but with a marked difference in the narration: "And the Lord God formed

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excommunication, was either supernaturally or otherwise inflicted on the offender; but that the object was to reclaim, and finally to save, is unquestionable. The same mode of expression, and with the same object in view, occurs in 1 Tim. i. 20: "Whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme."

man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." (v. 7.) The word is employed in many subsequent passages to signify the physical life of any animated being: *e.g.*, "Thou shalt give life for life," literally, "*soul for soul*." (Ex. xxi. 23.) "He shall give for the ransom of his life (Heb., his *soul*) whatsoever is laid upon him." (v. 30.) "He that killeth any man (Heb., that smiteth *any soul* of man) shall surely be put to death: And he that killeth a beast shall make it good; beast for beast," literally, "He that smiteth the *soul* of a beast shall requite it, *soul for soul*;" (Lev. xxiv. 17, 18)—in others, in a more restricted sense, to denote the rational soul or mind of man, as the seat of the feelings, will, and affections. It is frequently used for the whole person, or as an emphatic substitute for the personal pronoun; *e.g.*, "Give me the persons, (Heb., *souls*), and take the goods to thyself." (Gen. xiv. 21.) "Whatsoever soul it be that eateth any manner of blood, even that soul shall be cut off from his people." (Lev. vii. 27.) "Whatsoever soul it be that doeth any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people." (Lev. xxiii. 30.) "Let me die (Heb., Let *my soul* die) the death of the righteous." (Num. xxiii. 10.) "They die in youth (Heb., *their soul* dieth in youth)." (Job xxxvi. 14.) "My soul is among lions." (I am, or my person is.) (Ps. lvii. 4.) "Lest he tear my soul (me or my person) like a lion." (Ps. vii. 2.) "None can keep alive his own soul," *i. e.*, can keep himself alive, or preserve his own life. (Ps. xxii. 29.) This comprehensive use of the term for the whole person is recognized in our own language; as, in speaking of a shipwreck or sudden catastrophe, so many souls perished, or, not a soul escaped: but the Hebrew word is sometimes employed in a sense according to our idiom quite anomalous, that of a lifeless corpse, *e.g.*, "All the days that he (the Nazarite) separateth himself unto the Lord he shall come at no dead body." (Heb. "he shall not come upon the *soul of the dead*.")

Another word of the kind referred to is *Sheol*, which in three instances is rendered by our translators *pit*, and in all others, *the grave* or *hell*. Neither of these two words, however, in their

ordinary acceptation, correctly represents the original, which signifies in a more general sense the place or state of the dead, that is, of all mankind without distinction. It is never used in the plural number, nor in any instance to designate a particular person's grave or place of sepulture, which is expressed in Hebrew by another term; and that this is not precisely the idea of the word *Sheol* is shown by an examination of some of the passages where it is employed, though their general sense may not be affected by the exact meaning attached to the word itself; as when we say that a certain disease or accident brought a person to his death-bed, to his coffin, or to the grave, we merely employ one of three modes, though each involving a separate and distinct idea, of expressing the simple fact that it was the occasion of his death. Thus, in the very first passage where the word occurs, Jacob, lamenting for his son Joseph, exclaims: "I will go down into *Sheol* unto my son mourning" (Gen. xxxvii. 35); not into the *grave*, strictly speaking, for the patriarch, when he uttered these words, supposed that the body of his darling son had been devoured by wild beasts; nor into *hell*, in the sense we usually attach to that word, which we must be assured would have been utterly abhorrent to the feelings of the afflicted father; and a comparison of several passages where our translators adopt the latter rendering shows that it is employed alike in respect to the righteous and the wicked. Thus the Psalmist says: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in *Sheol*" (Ps. xvi. 10), which as a prediction of the resurrection of Christ, to whom it is applied by the Apostle Peter (Acts ii. 25), was literally verified, whether we take the word in its proper and more general sense, or the more limited one expressed by the version of Anthony Purver: "Thou wilt not leave my person in the grave;" or, as it is paraphrased by Milton:

" Though now I yield to death, and am his due,  
All that of me can die; yet, that debt paid,  
Thou wilt not leave me in the loathsome grave,  
His prey, nor suffer my unspotted soul,  
For ever with corruption there to dwell."

In Psalm ix. 17 we read: "The wicked shall be turned into *hell*."

This, however true in the usual sense of our English word, is more than the original imports, which is simply, shall be cut off or destroyed. "*Sheol*," remarks Hengstenberg, "appears specially as the dwelling-place of the wicked only in so far as they terminate their days before they are half spent, and descend before the time that the ordinary fate of mortality would have brought them to it." Purver, as in the preceding case, renders *grave*: "The wicked shall return to the very *grave*;" and subjoins in a note, "shall return to the earth whence they originally came, dying for their wickedness." Psalm lv. 15 is one of the imprecatory passages already referred to, as assuming a more repulsive aspect in our version than in the original: "Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into *hell*;" to which, however, our translators add in the margin, "or the *grave*." The word *quick* is here used in the sense, now almost obsolete, of *alive* or *living*, and the phraseology of the original is identical with that describing the fate of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram: "If the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into *Sheol*," or, as it is there rendered, "the pit." (Num. xx. 30.) And again: "They and all that appertained to them went down alive into the pit." (v. 33.) The Psalmist evidently alludes to the sudden destruction inflicted on that rebellious company, and the purport of the clause is, "Let them (or they shall) be cut off in the vigour of life; for," it is added, "wickedness is in their dwellings and among them:" being equivalent in sentiment to the concluding verse of the Psalm: "But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction; bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days." (Ps. lv. 23.) *Sheol*, from the verb *shaal*, to *ask* or *demand*, may signify literally the insatiable; and it is mentioned, (Prov. xxvii. 20, and xxx. 16), as one of the things which are never full and never satisfied; and in like manner by the prophet Habakkuk (ii. 5.) "Who enlargeth his desire as *Sheol*, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied; but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people." So far as can be gathered from incidental allu-

sions to the subject, it appears to have been regarded by the ancient Hebrews as a lower world, or deep subterranean region, enveloped in thick darkness, the common receptacle, for a period at least, of all the dead ; who there remained in a state of silence and unconsciousness, devoid of thought and sensation. " They," says the prophet Ezekiel of the Egyptians, " are all delivered unto death—

- To the nether parts of the earth ;  
In the midst of the children of men,  
Ez. xxxi. 14. With them that go down to the pit." \*
- " Though they dig into *Sheol* [English translation, *hell*], thence shall my hand take them ;  
Though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down."
- Amos ix. 2. " It (the knowledge of God) is high as heaven, what canst thou do ?
- Job xi. 8. Deeper than *Sheol* [E. T., *hell*], what canst thou know ? "
- " If I ascend up into heaven," (says the Psalmist,) " thou art there ;  
If I make my bed in *Sheol*," [E. T., *hell*],—in the deepest  
Ps. cxxxix. 8. recesses of the earth,—" behold ! thou art there."
- " Have the gates of death been opened unto thee ?
- Job xxxviii. 17. Or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death ? "
- " I said," (exclaimed Hezekiah,) " in the cutting off of my days,  
Isa. xxxviii. 10. I shall go to the gates of *Sheol*" [E. T., *the grave*.]
- " Cease, then," (says the afflicted Job,) " and let me alone,  
That I may take comfort a little ;  
Before I go whence I shall not return,  
To the land of darkness and the shadow of death ;  
A land of darkness, as darkness itself,  
Of the shadow of death, without any order,  
Job x. 20. And where the light is as darkness."
- " In death there is no remembrance of thee ;
- Psalm vi. 5. In *Sheol* [E. T., *the grave*] who shall give thee thanks ? "
- " The dead praise not the Lord,
- Ps. cxv. 17. Neither any that go down into silence."
- " Unless the Lord had been my help,

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\* Several Hebrew terms, analogous to our word *pit*, are occasionally substituted for *Sheol*.



- Ps. xciv. 17. My soul had almost (or quickly) dwelt in silence."  
 "Let the wicked be ashamed,  
 Ps. xxxi. 17. And let them be silent in *Sheol*." [E. T., *the grave*].  
 "Wilt thou show wonders to the dead?  
 Shall the dead arise and praise thee?  
 Shall thy loving-kindness be declared in the grave?  
 Or thy faithfulness in destruction?  
 Ps. lxxxviii. Shall thy wonders be known in the dark?  
 10—12. And thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?"

That consciousness and sensation, however, were not supposed to be extinct, but capable of being awakened into energy, is evinced by the prevalent belief in necromancy, or the art of divination by evoking or holding intercourse with the spirits of the dead, as in the narrative of Saul and the woman of Endor reputed to exercise such a power; which, whether the appearance of the prophet Samuel on that occasion be regarded as a piece of jugglery on her part, or a supernatural reality independent of her pretended arts, shows the popular ideas on the subject; and in that magnificent song of triumph contained in the fourteenth chapter of Isaiah, the great ones of the earth are represented as rising to accost the king of Babylon on his entrance among them, and insult him on his fall:

- "*Sheol* [E. T., *hell*] from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming;  
 It stirreth up the dead for thee, all the chief ones of the earth;  
 It hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations," &c.  
 Isaiah xiv. 9.

Although, as Bishop Lowth suggests, some of the notions entertained on the subject may have been derived from the custom of depositing the bodies of the deceased underground, and from sepulchral vaults, yet the word *gates*, as the entrance to an invisible and unexplored region, and other expressions in several of the preceding quotations, carry the idea beyond that of the mere place of interment, and in the present passage the distinction is strikingly marked; the chief ones of the earth and the kings of the nations, whose corpses were entombed in various countries, being depicted as all assembled

in *Sheol*, together with the king of Babylon, who is taunted with the indignity of lying unburied :—

“All the kings of the nations, all of them, lie in glory,  
Every one in his own house.” [Their bodies are enshrined  
in decorated tombs or stately mausoleums.]

“But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch;  
The raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a  
sword,  
That go down to the stones of the pit;  
As a carcase trodden under feet.

Verse 18—20. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial.”

“Those mighty dead,” remarks Dr. Campbell, “are raised not from their couches, which would have been the natural expression had the prophet’s idea been a sepulchral vault, how magnificent soever, but *from their thrones*, as suited the notion of all antiquity, concerning, not the bodies, but the shades or ghosts of the departed; to which was always assigned something similar in rank and occupation to what they possessed upon the earth.”—*Campbell on Gospels, Preliminary Dissertation*, 6. So the prophet Ezekiel describes “the mighty fallen,” as “gone down to *Sheol* [E.T., *hell*] with their weapons of war,” and “their swords laid under their heads;” but in these highly poetical passages some allowance may be made for picturesque colouring and imagery.

The Hebrew term *Sheol* is uniformly represented in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, and also in the New Testament, by *Hades*, the word signifying literally the invisible place, employed by the Greeks, like the *Avernus* or *Infernus* of the Romans, to designate the abode of the dead, according to their idea, which in its leading features appears to have very much coincided with that of the Hebrews, but with the addition of various gross and fanciful notions. As the doctrine of a future retribution gained ground amongst the Jews, they appear, in the absence of any declaration in their law, or other express revelation on the subject, to have adopted the view of two distinct abodes in the regions of *Sheol*, one of happiness and the other of misery, similar to the *Elysium* and *Tartarus* of the Greeks and Romans; to the former of which they gave the name of

the Garden of Eden or Paradise, and of Abraham's bosom, a metaphor derived from the customary mode of reclining at meals. Thus in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, in which our Saviour adapts the imagery to the ideas prevailing among His auditors, they are represented as in different portions of the regions of the dead, distant from, yet in sight of each other, but separated by an impassable gulf. (Luke xvi. 23-26.)

Our English or Anglo-Saxon word, from the verb *helan*, to cover, is analogous in its original sense to the Greek *Hades*. "The English word *hell*," observes Bishop Horsley, "in its primary and natural meaning signifies nothing more than the unseen and covered place; and it is properly used both in the Old and New Testament to render the Hebrew word in the one, and the Greek word in the other, which denote the invisible mansion of disembodied souls, without any reference to sufferings."—(*Encycl. Metropol., in voc.*) Since, however, the latter sense is associated with its ordinary use, it might tend to prevent misapprehension to adopt the term *Hades*, as is frequently done by more recent translators of the whole or portions of the Scriptures, where the state of the dead in a general sense is intended, and to confine the use of our English word, as the representative of the Greek term *Gehenna*, which in the New Testament designates a place or state of future punishment.\* This word, though of Hebrew origin, is not to be found in the Old Testament, and, like our English term, is thus employed in a secondary sense. It signifies literally the valley of Hinnom or Tophet, in the vicinity of Jerusalem, which was at one period the place of those idolatrous and abominable sacrifices wherein the people caused their children to pass through the fire to Moloch, and afterwards became a receptacle for the filth

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\* Most of the continental translators preserve the distinction between the two words. Luther is an exception, who renders both by the German word corresponding to and nearly identical with our own. Thomson, the American translator of the whole Bible from the Greek (Philadelphia, 1808), renders *Hades*, "the mansion of the dead." The Hebrew word (without vowel points) is identical with *Saul*, the name of the first king of Israel and of the apostle of the Gentiles.

of the city and the dead bodies of animals and malefactors, to consume which fires were from time to time kept burning; and hence the name became the designation for a place or state of future misery; for as the happiness of the righteous is portrayed under the emblems of sensible objects and enjoyments—nuptial banquets, white robes, and branches of palm, delightful gardens, (such is the literal meaning of the word paradise,) fruitful trees, and flowing streams, walls of precious stones, and gates of pearl—so the opposite state is denoted by the greatest torment to which the human frame can be subjected.

“The belief of immortality and a future recompense,” remarks Hengstenberg, “was in various ways prepared in the Pentateuch. According to its teaching, death is not the natural and necessary attendant of human existence, but the wages of sin. With this view of death, faith in an eternal life must of necessity break forth as soon as the hope of redemption enters—the hope of having the rest restored that was lost in Adam. Farther, man was made in God’s image, and in that lies the possibility not merely of immortality in the general, but of a blessed or a wretched immortality—of eternal life or condemnation. The doctrine taught in the Pentateuch respecting God likewise points on all hands to the same conclusion. Even the absolute spirituality of God, His entire separation from everything earthly, points in that direction; for it delivers the soul from the most dangerous enemy of faith in respect to an eternal life—a necessary connection with what is seen and temporal. The unlimited omnipotence of God assures us of His being *able*, while the greatness of His love, as that discovers itself especially in His dealings with His people, assures us of His being *willing*. That God should enter into so close and endearing a relation to man as we find Him doing with the patriarchs, would be a contradiction if man’s life were to be bounded by the present existence.\* But the most direct preparation made by the Pentateuch consists in its constantly and diligently enforcing the doctrine of the temporal

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\* See Matt. xxii. 31, 32.

recompense. Experience shows that where this doctrine has struck its root, faith in an eternal recompense of itself springs up ; but that where this foundation is wanting, the building of a belief in immortality rests upon the sand, and is liable to be thrown down by the first blast. But while it is true that the Pentateuch contains the best preparation for a faith in immortality, it is not less true that it did little to call forth directly this faith. A considerable number of passages undoubtedly point to a simple immortality, but only one contains a distinct allusion to it—the narrative of Enoch’s translation, in which it is of special importance to remark that his walk with God is intentionally and expressly placed in a causal connection with his being taken by God.”

“In the Psalms, also, there are preparations of various kinds for faith in respect to eternal life. The old Mosaic doctrine of the inseparable connection between righteousness and prosperity pervades them from beginning to end, and the sacred bards wrestle and fight to maintain it against all assaults. He who is united to God is sure of what is really good even in the midst of trouble ; on the other hand, prosperity without God is uncertain and transitory. In the prophets, also, who first lifted off the veil, the foundation of this faith is not the abolition of the Mosaic doctrine of recompense, but the firm conviction of its reality ; which in the New Testament also is not opposed, but rather powerfully confirmed. A real germ of the faith in an immortal existence is likewise contained in those passages of the Psalms which express a confident expectation of deliverance from threatening danger, whether in reference to individuals or the whole community ; those in which the redemption of the community from political death is spoken of with undoubting confidence ; or those, again, which speak of the redemption of individuals from the deepest distress, as of a resurrection from the dead. The reviving of the dead in a figurative sense contains the pledge of it in a literal one.” (Psalms lxxvi.—lxxxiv.)

“It might appear that the deficiency of view in regard to eternal life must have deprived the holy singers of all vigour of faith, and all joy in sufferings ; and certainly it is not to be denied that great

and heavy temptations arose to the believers of the Old Testament from their not having had a clear view of it opened to them, but it is also not to be overlooked that the *substance* of faith respecting eternal life, even though the clear apprehension of it failed, is everywhere found where the powers of the future world have sunk into the soul, and then, that under the old covenant the extraordinary sources of consolation flowed the more copiously that the ordinary ones were so scanty." (Psalm lxxxix.)

Hengstenberg, whose view of this subject I have thus quoted in a condensed form, accounts for "the fact that the Psalms, while they contain the germ of the doctrine of eternal life, do not give any clear and definite utterance to" it, though "they partly belong to a later period than the passages of the prophets in which it is unquestionably propounded," on the ground that it had not probably penetrated the mass of the community; to which his translator appends the following modifying and appropriate remark:—"The Psalms are the spiritual songs of the ancient Church, adapted throughout to her typical condition and worship, which necessarily presented the future under the form and shadow of the present, and the Psalms *must* speak in the same style. The prophets, however, agreeably to the end of their mission, avowedly directed the minds of the people to the prospect of good things to come, and therefore could not but occasionally, especially after the things belonging to the typical state were hopelessly shattered and broken, lift up to some extent the veil from the future." (Psalm xc.)

Interesting and important as we may regard a clear view and correct appreciation of the genuine literal import of Scripture, not only as respects those portions which at once appeal to the minds and consciences of all, as revealing truths or inculcating precepts of universal concernment or obligation, but also as a sound basis for the legitimate, though less direct application of many others to present times, and to our own condition and relations as individuals or communities, yet the right employment of them in this way is in itself a matter to us of still deeper interest, of still higher importance; and to no part of the sacred volume does this remark apply with

greater force than to the Book of Psalms; containing as it does so rich a repository of devotional feeling, in words penned indeed under various circumstances, and in many respects widely differing from our own, yet familiarized to us from our earliest years, and inseparably associated and interwoven with our religious impressions and sensibilities. Under the illuminating beams of the Gospel of Christ, by which life and immortality, emerging from the veils and shadows of preceding dispensations, have been brought to light, the songs of Zion assume a new aspect, acquiring extended relations, and reflecting a lustre surpassing, it may be, the conceptions even of the inspired bards by whom they were indited: the prayers of David against the enemies who persecuted his soul and sought his life, may be adopted by the Christian without reserve for the destruction of his spiritual foes "that war against the soul;" the petitions for deliverance from death, and the promises of long life and length of days, apply with a more intense and a more elevated emphasis to salvation from that death which is beyond the grave, and the full fruition of that life which shall endure for ever; Israel, the chosen people of God, and Zion and Jerusalem, "the city of their solemnities," "the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High," appear as the typical representatives of the universal Church of Christ, and of her eternal inheritance, wherein the redeemed of the Lord shall finally be assembled from every tribe and nation, the heavenly Jerusalem, the "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

# The Book of Praises:

BEING THE

## BOOK OF PSALMS.

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### PSALM I.

This Psalm, of the author or date of which we have no record, forms a very appropriate introduction to the Book, as describing in general and concise terms the condition of the righteous and the ungodly. "The collector of these songs seems to have placed carefully before the eye of his readers, at the very threshold, to what aim the actions of men should, as so many arrows, be directed."—*Hengstenberg* from *Amyrald*.

1 BLESSED is the man

That walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly,

Nor standeth in the way of sinners,

Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord ;

And in his law doth he meditate day and night.

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PSALM i. 1. *Blessed*. The Hebrew has the plural form, by some considered merely idiomatic, but by most commentators as emphatic. Literally, *The happinesses of the man*. "Blessed with happiness from every source from which it could be derived."—*Phillips*. Hengstenberg understands the several clauses of v. 1 as denoting simply different modes of wickedness; but many remark a gradational climax. "*To walk*, casual intercourse; *stand*, closer intimacy; *sit*, fixed and permanent connection; *counsel*, ordinary place of meeting or public resort; *way*, select and chosen footpath; *seat*, habitual and final resting-place; *ungodly*, negatively wicked; *sinners*, positively wicked; *scornful*, scoffers at the very name or notion of piety and goodness."—*Jebb's Sacred Literature*, p. 41. If so, the gradation is not of the degrees of virtue attained, but those of wickedness avoided, the happiness being measured by the magnitude of the evil escaped. *Counsel* may be more correctly explained of the course of life which a man lays down for himself, as in Ps. lxxxi. 12; 2 Chron. xxii. 5; Micah vi. 16.



- 3 And he shall be like a tree  
 Planted by the rivers of water,  
 That bringeth forth his fruit in his season ;  
 His leaf also shall not wither ;  
 And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.
- 4 The ungodly *are* not so :  
 But *are* like the chaff which the wind driveth away.
- 5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,  
 Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
- 6 For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous :  
 But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

## PSALM II.

This Psalm is ascribed to David by the apostles, Acts iv. 25. Its relation to the Messiah and His kingdom is supported by the general, if not universal interpretation of the ancient Jews, as well as that of the New Testament (Acts iv. 25, xiii. 33 ; Heb. i. 5, v. 5), and of Christian commentators generally ; but the modern Jews, from hostility to Christianity, and some later German writers, have endeavoured to confine it to David or Solomon ; and others, who adopt the Messianic interpretation typically, suppose it to relate immediately to David's victory over the Philistines. 2 Sam. viii. On the difficulties attending its application to any period of the Jewish monarchy, and the arguments for its exclusively Messianic character, see *Phillips, Hengstenberg, and Rosenmüller*.

- 1 WHY do the heathen rage,  
 And the people imagine a vain thing,

3. *Rivers* ; rather *streams*, the channels in gardens cut for the purpose of irrigation.—See *Burder's Oriental Customs*, No. 664.

4. *Like the chaff*. A frequent metaphor, derived from the Eastern custom of threshing in the open air ; the floor being placed on heights and the corn thrown aloft till the wind has driven the chaff away.

5. *Therefore*, some would render *because*, deeming v. 5 the *cause*, not the *effect* of what immediately precedes ; but *therefore* is best supported by the Hebrew, and quite appropriate if, with Horsley, we apply v. 4 to "the instability of the principles, rather than of the fortunes of the ungodly ;" or, with Hengstenberg, refer the cause to v. 3 and 4 jointly. "The righteous are prosperous, the wicked unprosperous, therefore," &c.

6. *Knoweth*. "The knowing here comprehends blessing as its necessary consequence."—*Hengstenberg*.

- 2 The kings of the earth set themselves,  
And the rulers take counsel together,  
Against the Lord, and against his anointed ? *saying*,
- 3 Let us break their bands asunder,  
And cast away their cords from us.
- 4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh :  
The Lord shall have them in derision.
- 5 Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath,  
And vex them in his sore displeasure.
- 6 Yet have I set my king  
Upon my holy hill of Zion.
- 7 I will declare the decree :  
The Lord hath said unto me,  
Thou *art* my Son ;  
This day have I begotten thee.
- 8 Ask of me, and I shall give *thee*  
The heathen *for* thine inheritance,  
And the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession.
- 9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron ;  
Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.
- 10 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings :  
Be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

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PSALM II. 7. The exposition of Luther, and others, who, considering the eternal generation of the Son to be here implied, understand *this day* as signifying *from all eternity*, seems forced. It is better to regard the whole sentence as declaratory—This day I *pronounce* Thee to be in the most intimate relation to Myself, and invested with all Divine and regal authority. This view is supported by Paul's application of the text to the resurrection of Christ (Acts xiii. 33), to which Calvin referring adds, "He is said to have been begotten, not in the sense of then beginning, as regarded Himself, to be the Son of God, but of being manifested as such to the world." With this also harmonizes Rom. i. 4 ; "Declared to be the Son of God with power—by the resurrection from the dead."

9. *Break*. The Septuagint and other translators, ancient and modern, deriving the verb from another root, render *rule* ; but *break* is more in accordance with the parallel line.

- 11 Serve the Lord with fear.  
And rejoice with trembling.
- 12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry,  
And ye perish *from* the way.  
When his wrath is kindled but a little.  
Blessed *are* all they that put their trust in him.

### PSALM III.

A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son.

On the appropriateness of this Psalm to the occasion to which the superscription assigns it, see *Hengstenberg*. The *Selah*, which here occurs for the first time, marks three progressive stages of the sense. "In the first division, the Psalmist utters a plaintive prayer against the oppression of blaspheming enemies. In the second, fear is dispelled, and confidence and joy succeed; and he lies down with the assurance of divine protection. In the concluding one, he rises from sleep, having been protected through the perils of the night, and refreshed and fortified, is prepared to meet his enemies in certainty of conquest. The *Selah* at the close indicates the connexion of this Psalm with another, probably the fourth."—*Jebb*.

- 1 LORD, how are they increased that trouble me !  
Many *are* they that rise up against me.
- 2 Many *there be* which say of my soul,  
*There is no help for him in God.* Selah.

12. *Kiss the Son.* The Hebrew is not בֶּן (Ben) the usual word for *son*, as in v. 7, but בָּר (Bar) which is the Chaldee and Syriac for *son*, but in Hebrew may mean *pure* or *chosen*. Hence, some would render, *Kiss the Chosen one*; or, *Arm yourselves with purity*. The Septuagint and Vulgate, *Receive instruction*. But it is most probable that בָּר (Bar) was sometimes used in poetry for בֶּן (Ben) as in Proverbs xxxi. 2. The context here seems to require a personal sense, and the common version is the most simple and satisfactory. *But a little*; rather, *For soon will his wrath be kindled*, that is, unless you do him homage.—Compare Matt. xxi. 37-41.

PSALM iii. 2. *Say of my soul*; rather, *to my soul*. "What the enemies say of David is so painful that he considers it as spoken personally to himself. To the man who with his whole being throws himself upon God, it is even as death in his bones to hear his enemies saying, 'Where is thy God?' This is the most envenomed arrow they could shoot into his heart."—*Hengstenberg*.

- 3 But thou, O Lord, *art* a shield for me ;  
My glory, and the lifter up of mine head.  
4 I cried unto the Lord with my voice,  
And he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.
- 5 I laid me down and slept ;  
I awaked ; for the Lord sustained me.  
6 I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people,  
That have set *themselves* against me round about.
- 7 Arise, O Lord ; save me, O my God :  
For thou hast smitten all mine enemies *upon* the cheek-bone ;  
Thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.  
8 Salvation *belongeth* unto the Lord :  
Thy blessing *is* upon thy people. Selah.

PSALM IV.

To the chief Musician [*or, overseer*] on Neginoth. A Psalm of David.

Psalm iv. is generally considered, like the preceding, to refer to events connected with Absalom's rebellion. On this supposition, verse 7 may contain a tacit allusion to the supplies brought to David by Zeba and Barzillai. 2 Sam. xvi. 1, xvii. 27-29. The objections to this view are considered and answered by *Hengstenberg*, who thus explains the superscription, "A Psalm of David to be delivered to the president of the musicians, that he may arrange for its exhibition with the accompaniments of stringed instruments." *Neginoth*, from *nagau*, to *strike* or play on a musical instrument, seems to be a general name for stringed instruments played on by striking.

- 1 HEAR me when I call,  
O God of my righteousness :  
Thou hast enlarged me *when I was* in distress ;  
Have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.

3. *Shield for me.* The marginal rendering *about* is preferable. The present and Psalm v. appear to have been composed as morning hymns, and Psalm iv. as an evening hymn. See Psalms iii. 5, iv. 8, v. 3.

- 2 O ye sons of men,  
How long *will ye turn* my glory into shame?  
How long will ye love vanity,  
And seek after leasing? Selah.
- 3 But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly  
for himself:  
The Lord will hear when I call unto him.
- 4 Stand in awe, and sin not :  
Commune with your own heart upon your bed,  
And be still. Selah.
- 5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness,  
And put your trust in the Lord.
- 6 *There be many that say,*  
Who will show us *any* good ?  
Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.
- 7 Thou hast put gladness in my heart,  
More than in the time *that* their corn and their wine increased.
- 8 I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep :  
For thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.

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PSALM iv. 2. *How long [will ye turn] my glory into shame ?* How long shall my glory, my trust in God, be to you a subject of reproach? The Seventy, from a reading differing in one letter from the present Hebrew, render, *How long are ye slow of heart ?* *Leasing*, an Anglo-Saxon word, now obsolete, for *lying*. Why do ye pursue that which will, in the end, deceive your expectations ?

3. "The meaning is, Think not that it is of men that I am become king; God Himself hath chosen me, whom He knew to be a pious worshipper, to that honour from among the people; and ye who presume to fight against me, really fight against Him, who also will undertake my cause."—Hengstenberg.

8. *Both lay me down, &c.*; rather, *at once*. I will resign myself immediately to sleep, in the full confidence of Divine protection. The three divisions of this Psalm, marked by *Selah*, correspond in sentiment to those of the preceding one; but in this there is a great moral progression, explanatory and expansive of the former."—Jebb (who illustrates this view at length in his notes on v. 2, 5, and 7.)

PSALM V.

To the chief Musician upon Nehiloth. A Psalm of David.

Psalm v. is referred by some to the same occasion as Psalms iii. and iv. Verse 10 seems to accord with the petition of David respecting Ahithophel's counsel, and the overthrow of it by Hushai. 2 Sam. xv. 31, xvii. 11-13. *Nehiloth*, which occurs only here, probably denotes a wind instrument, or those of that class generally. With this difference, the meaning of the title will be the same as Psalm iv.

- 1 Give ear to my words, O Lord,  
Consider my meditation.
- 2 Harken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God :  
For unto thee will I pray.
- 3 My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord ;  
In the morning will I direct *my prayer* unto thee, and will  
look up.
- 4 For thou *art* not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness :  
Neither shall evil dwell with thee.
- 5 The foolish shall not stand in thy sight :  
Thou hatest all workers of iniquity.
- 6 Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing :  
The Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.
- 7 But as for me, I will come *into* thy house in the multitude  
of thy mercy :  
*And* in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.
- 8 Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness,  
Because of mine enemies ;  
Make thy way straight before my face.
- 9 For *there is* no faithfulness in their mouth ;  
Their inward part *is* very wickedness ;  
Their throat *is* an open sepulchre ;  
They flatter with their tongue.

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PSALM v. 3. *Will I direct.* The ellipsis may be supplied with *my voice* from the previous clause, or by giving the verb a reflective sense ; as the Seventy, *I will present myself before thee.*

5. *The foolish, or vainglorious.*

9. *They flatter with their tongue ;* more correctly, They polish or make smooth their tongue ; *i.e.*, defend their conduct, and deceive their adherents, by smooth speeches and plausible arguments.

- 3 O Lord my God, if I have done this ;  
 If there be iniquity in my hands ;  
 4 If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me ;  
 Yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy :  
 5 Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it ;  
 Yea let him tread down my life upon the earth,  
 And lay mine honour in the dust. Selah.  
 6 Arise, O Lord, in thine anger,  
 Lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies :  
 And awake for me to the judgment *that* thou hast commanded.  
 7 So shall the congregation of the people compass thee about :  
 For their sakes therefore return thou on high.  
 8 The Lord shall judge the people :  
 Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness,  
 And according to mine integrity *that is* in me.  
 9 Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end ;  
 But establish the just :  
 For the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.

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4. *I have delivered.* The primary meaning of the Hebrew is to *extract*, *take off*, and thence to *plunder* or *oppress*. This rendering preserves the parallel, for which our translation substitutes a parenthesis—

“ If I have rewarded evil to him that was at peace with me ;  
 Or *oppressed* him that without cause is my enemy.”

Thus David vindicates himself alike from ingratitude towards his friend and injury to his enemy.

6. *Awake, &c.* This may be better rendered in an active sense. *Awake* [raise up, or hasten] *for me the judgment which thou hast appointed.*

7. *For their sakes ; or over them, or it ; i.e.,* exalted in the presence of the congregation. In these verses “ Jehovah is described as descending from heaven to sit in judgment on the merits of the two parties, and to render justice to the innocent in the sight of the whole world. To make the sentence more impressive, He is further entreated to return on high, and proclaim the unerring and unchangeable verdict in the ears of the congregation of mankind.”—*Phillips.*

8. The Chaldee gives a more complete sense to the last clause, having either read a word now wanting in the Hebrew, or supplied the ellipsis from the former line : *According to mine integrity, render, or, give sentence upon me.*

- 10 My defence *is* of God,  
Which saveth the upright in heart.
- 11 God judgeth the righteous ;  
And God is angry *with the wicked* every day.
- 12 If he turn not, he will whet his sword ;  
He hath bent his bow, and made it ready.
- 13 He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death ;  
He ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors.
- 14 Behold, he travaileth with iniquity,  
And hath conceived mischief,  
And brought forth falsehood.
- 15 He made a pit, and digged it,  
And is fallen into the ditch *which* he made.
- 16 His mischief shall return upon his own head,  
And his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.
- 17 I will praise the Lord according to his righteousness :  
And will sing praise to the name of the Lord most high.

PSALM VIII.

To the chief Musician upon Gittith. A Psalm of David.

*Gittith.* Probably a musical instrument invented at Gath. This Psalm, as Hengstenberg remarks, is the first chapter of Genesis turned into a song of praise to God, in contemplation of the wonders of creation and the dignity and authority with which He invested man over the works of His hands. It is applied by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, ch. ii. 6, to Christ, in whom the glory of human nature, deteriorated by the fall, appears anew in full splendour.

1 O LORD our Lord,  
How excellent *is* thy name in all the earth !

11. *God judgeth the righteous ;* rather, *God is a righteous judge.* There is some obscurity in the next line, which may be rendered with the ancient versions, *Not inflicting vengeance every day, i.e., slow to anger.* Yet (v. 12) *if he [the wicked] turn not, he [God] will whet his sword, &c.*

13. *He ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors, or maketh his arrows burning.*

14. Behold he hath *conceived* iniquity,  
And *travailed* with mischief,  
And brought forth falsehood ;

—Or *vanity* ; that which has disappointed his expectation.

PSALM viii.—1 and 9 ; *Jehovah our Lord.* The practice of rendering the



- Who hast set thy glory above the heavens.  
 2 Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings  
 Hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies,  
 That thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.
- 8 When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,  
 The moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained ;  
 4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him ?  
 And the son of man, that thou visitest him ?  
 5 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels,  
 And hast crowned him with glory and honour.  
 6 Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy  
 hands ;  
 Thou hast put all *things* under his feet :  
 7 All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field ;  
 8 The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea,  
*And whatsoever* passeth through the paths of the seas.

---

name *Jehovah* as well as *Adonai*, by *Lord*, substitutes in such passages as these an unmeaning tautology for the force and beauty of the original.

2. *Strength*. The Hebrew may be rendered *praise*, as the Septuagint, which is quoted, Matt. xxi. 16.

3. The *sun* not being specified has led to the conclusion that the Psalmist had only a night scene in view, but as the sun is the object which first strikes the mind on referring to the heavens, the first line may be considered as applying to their appearance by day.

5. *Angels*. So the Septuagint, quoted Heb. ii. 7, and the versions generally. There seems, however, no necessity to reject the usual meaning of the Hebrew *God*. Thou madest him little inferior to *Deity*, forming him after thine own image, placing him as thy representative on earth, and endowing him with the lordship of creation. This passage, spoken by the Psalmist of mankind at large, is employed by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews with special reference to Christ. The versions of Luther and Coverdale are evidently adapted to this application of it. Luther—"Thou wilt suffer him for a little time to be forsaken of God, but with glory and honour wilt thou crown him." Coverdale—"After thou hadst for a season made him lower than the angels, thou crownedst him with glory and honour."

8. *And whatsoever*. These words are not in the Hebrew, which may be rendered, "*He [man] passeth through the paths of the sea,*" referring to the dominion over that element acquired by the art of navigation.

- 9 O LORD our Lord,  
How excellent is thy name in all the earth !

PSALM IX.

To the chief Musician upon Muth-labben. A Psalm of David.

Various explanations have been given of *Múthlabben*, but all merely conjectural. From its connection, like similar terms in the previous titles, with "the chief musician," it seems most probably the name of an instrument or tune. The subject of the Psalm appears to be thanksgiving for a national victory, or for the depression of the wicked.

- 1 I WILL praise thee, O LORD, with my whole heart ;  
I will show forth all thy marvellous works.  
2 I will be glad and rejoice in thee :  
I will sing praise to thy name, O thou Most High.  
3 When mine enemies are turned back,  
They shall fall and perish at thy presence.  
4 For thou hast maintained my right and my cause ;  
Thou satest in the throne judging right.  
5 Thou hast rebuked the heathen ;  
Thou hast destroyed the wicked ;  
Thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.  
6 O thou enemy,  
Destructions are come to a perpetual end.  
And thou hast destroyed cities ;  
Their memorial is perished with them.  
7 But the LORD shall endure for ever :  
He hath prepared his throne for judgment.

PSALM ix. 6. The first clause of this verse has been variously rendered. The marginal—"The destructions of the enemy are come to a perpetual end, and their cities hast thou destroyed." The Seventy render, "The swords of the enemy have utterly failed." Luther—"The swords of the enemy have an end." The sense given by our translators seems at least as probable as any. It may be understood to be addressed to some conqueror, who is told that his triumphs and ravages are at an end ; or if, with some, we consider *destructions* to denote the cities subjected to destruction, it will imply the perpetual ruin of those of the enemy ; but the former sense seems to accord better with the literal meaning of the word, and with the subsequent part of the verse.

- 8 And he shall judge the world in righteousness,  
He shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.
- 9 The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed,  
A refuge in times of trouble.
- 10 And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee :  
For thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.
- 11 Sing praises to the LORD, which dwelleth in Zion :  
Declare among the people his doings.
- 12 When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth  
them :  
He forgetteth not the cry of the humble.
- 13 Have mercy upon me, O LORD ;  
Consider my trouble *which I suffer* of them that hate me,  
Thou that liftest me up from the gates of death :
- 14 That I may show forth all thy praise  
In the gates of the daughter of Zion :  
I will rejoice in thy salvation.
- 15 The heathen are sunk down in the pit *that* they made :  
In the net which they hid is their own foot taken.
- 16 The LORD is known *by* the judgment *which* he executeth ;  
The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands.  
Higgaion. Selah.
- 17 The wicked shall be turned into hell,  
*And* all the nations that forget God.
- 18 For the needy shall not alway be forgotten :  
The expectation of the poor shall *not* perish for ever.
- 19 Arise, O LORD ; let not man prevail :

12. *Remembereth them* ; rather, *it*. The pronoun appears to refer to *blood* which is plural in the Hebrew. The French version, though not quite literal, preserves the number of the original: "*Car il fait enquête de meurtres, et il s'ensouvient.*"

16. *Higgaion*, rendered *meditation* in Psalm xix. 14, here, in connexion with *Selah*, probably denotes a pause for meditation, or it may indicate a change of time or instrument. *A song of pauses or interlude*.—Septuagint and others. In Psalm xcii. 3, *Higgaion* most probably signifies some musical instrument.—See note there.

Let the heathen be judged in thy sight.  
 20 Put them in fear, O LORD :  
*That the nations may know themselves to be but men.*  
 Selah.

PSALM X.

This Psalm is without a title, and in several Hebrew MSS. and ancient versions forms a part of the ninth, to which it bears considerable resemblance, as well in the subject as in some of the expressions; but viewing the two as one, the tenth would be more appropriate as the commencement than the conclusion, being occupied with supplication and complaint, while the ninth breathes the language of thanksgiving and victory.

- 1 WHY standest thou afar off, O LORD ?  
*Why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble ?*
- 2 The wicked in *his* pride doth persecute the poor.  
 Let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.
- 3 For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire,  
 And blesseth the covetous, *whom* the LORD abhorreth.
- 4 The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not  
 seek *after God* :  
 God is not in all his thoughts.
- 5 His ways are always grievous ;  
 Thy judgments *are* far above out of his sight :  
*As for all his enemies, he puffeth at them.*

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20. *Put them in fear.* The reading here varies both in the Hebrew MSS. and the ancient versions. The majority have it : *Set a teacher over them.*

PSALM x. 2. May be more correctly rendered : *Through the pride* (or, *in the exaltation*) *of the wicked, the poor is persecuted.* Luther—"While the wicked practise insolence the poor must suffer."

3. The last clause may be rendered perhaps more correctly, *He blesseth [his] gain, despising the Lord.*

4. Some adopt the rendering given by our translators in the margin : "All his thoughts are, there is no God," but that in the text is preferable. The character described is not a *theoretical* but a *practical* atheist, one who acts in total disregard of God.

5. *Grievous.* The Hebrew may be rendered *prosperous*, so several of the ancient versions ; which seems more appropriate to the context, describing the worldly success of the wicked.

- 6 He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved :  
For *I shall* never be in adversity.
- 7 His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud :  
Under his tongue is mischief and vanity.
- 8 He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages :  
In the secret places doth he murder the innocent :  
His eyes are privily set against the poor.
- 9 He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den :  
He lieth in wait to catch the poor :  
He doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net.
- 10 He croucheth, *and* humbleth himself,  
That the poor may fall by his strong ones.
- 11 He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten :  
He hideth his face ; he will never see *it*.
- 12 Arise, O Lord ; O God, lift up thine hand :  
Forget not the humble.
- 13 Wherefore doth the wicked condemn God ?  
He hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require *it*.
- 14 Thou hast seen *it* ;  
For thou beholdest mischief and spite,  
To requite *it* with thy hand :

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6. The *never*, according to the construction of the Hebrew, appears to belong to the previous clause.

He hath said in his heart  
I shall not be removed for ever,  
Because I am not (or, he is not) in adversity.

He regards his present freedom from distress as an assurance of future prosperity.

10. *Croucheth and humbleth himself*. Some refer these verbs to the poor, but it seems best to apply them, as our translators do, to the wicked, who, by a continuation of the metaphor in the preceding verse, is compared to a lion preparing to spring upon his prey. *Strong ones*. "Probably," says Gesenius, "a poetical epithet for strong limbs, teeth, clutches."

14. *To requite*. The Hebrew [literally, to give or put] does not appear to admit of this meaning. It may be rendered, *To place* [as a memorial] *on thy hand* ; or, with the Italian and Bishop Horsley, *To take* [the matter] *into thy hand*. The French expresses the general sense, though more para-

- The poor committeth himself unto thee ;  
 Thou art the helper of the fatherless.
- 15 Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man :  
 Seek out his wickedness *till* thou find none.
- 16 The LORD is King for ever and ever :  
 The heathen are perished out of his land.
- 17 LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble :  
 Thou wilt prepare their heart,  
 Thou wilt cause thine ear to hear :
- 18 To judge the fatherless and the oppressed,  
 That the man of the earth may no more oppress.

PSALM XI.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

"David's friends advise him to flee from the dangers with which he is threatened, perhaps by the persecution of Saul. The Psalm is in the form of a dialogue, v. 1 introducing the advice of his friends, which is continued to the end of v. 3, and the remainder containing his reply, wherein he declares his unshaken confidence in God."—*Phillips Ab.*

- 1 IN the LORD put I my trust :  
 How say ye to my soul,

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phrastically : "*Tu regardes quand une outrage ou qu'on afflige quelqu'un, pour le prendre en ta protection.*"

17. *Prepare.* The marginal rendering is preferable, *establish* or *confirm*.

18. *The man of the earth* ; literally, "*Man from the earth* ; i.e., an earthly, frail, impotent man."—*Phillips.*

PSALM xi. 1. *My soul* ; equivalent to *me*, but more emphatic.—Uttering words that pierce my soul (see Psalm iii. 2, and note). *Flee as a bird to your mountain* These words present a grammatical difficulty in the use of the plural referring to a singular subject. Several Hebrew MSS. have the verb in the singular, and by a different division of the succeeding words, the *as*, instead of being supplied by the translator, becomes part of the original text, and the *your* is removed : thus—*Flee to the mountain as a bird*. With this several ancient versions agree. The necessity for a change in the common Hebrew reading is however obviated, if, with Horsley, we refer the verb to *Tzipor* which signifies a *sparrow* or *small bird*, and consider the term applicable either to individuals or species, and in the latter sense properly admitting

- Flee as a bird to your mountain ?  
 2 For, lo, the wicked bend *their* bow,  
 They make ready their arrow upon the *string*,  
 That they may privily shoot at the upright in heart.  
 3 If the foundations be destroyed,  
 What can the righteous do ?  
 4 The LORD *is* in his holy temple,  
 The LORD's throne *is* in heaven :  
 His eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.  
 5 The LORD trieth the righteous :  
 But the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul  
 hateth.  
 6 Upon the wicked he shall reign snares,  
 Fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest :  
*This shall be* the portion of their cup.  
 7 For the righteous LORD loveth righteousness :  
 His countenance doth behold the upright.

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of plural adjuncts. *Flee, sparrows, to your mountain.* "The expression," he says, "I take to be proverbial, denoting a situation of helplessness and danger, in which there was no hope of safety but in flight."

3. *If, &c., or, For the foundations are destroyed ;* the friends of David continuing to urge their reasons for flight. On the supposition that the Psalm relates to his persecution by Saul, this verse is thus well paraphrased by Adam Clarke : "If Saul, the vicegerent of God, has cast aside his fear, and regards neither truth nor justice, a righteous man has no security for his life."

4. *His eyes behold.* Several ancient versions add *the poor ;* which may possibly have been lost in the Hebrew, from its resemblance to the preceding word.

6. *Snares* seem out of place in a metaphor derived from a storm. The precise meaning is uncertain. The marginal rendering is, *quick, burning coals.* "*Pachim*—Bishop Lowth explains by *balls* of fire [*bolides*—Pliny], or simply *lightning.* This is a manifest allusion to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah."—*B. C. B.* Perhaps from *Pooach* to *blow*, it may be rendered *blasts.* *Horrible tempest.* "Glouring or burning wind like the simoom."—*Gesenius.*

PSALM XII.

To the chief Musician upon Sheminith. A Psalm of David.

*Sheminith* :—See Psalm vi. Conjectures on the date and occasion of this Psalm are various. "Some think it was written when the Ziphites betrayed David to Saul."—*B.C.B.* Hengstenberg considers it was composed for the Church at large, in reference to prevailing impiety.

- 1 HELP, LORD ; for the godly man ceaseth ;  
For the faithful fail from among the children of men.
- 2 They speak vanity every one with his neighbour :  
*With flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.*
- 3 The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips,  
*And the tongue that speaketh proud things :*
- 4 Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail ;  
Our lips *are* our own : who is lord over us ?
- 5 For the oppression of the poor,  
For the sighing of the needy,  
Now will I arise, saith the LORD ;  
I will set *him* in safety *from him that puffeth at him.*
- 6 The words of the LORD *are* pure words :  
*As silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.*
- 7 Thou shalt keep them, O LORD,  
Thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.

PSALM xii. 5. *I will set him, &c.* The expression is elliptical, and may be written in full, thus:—*I will place in safety the man whom he [the wicked] puffeth at.* The Septuagint gives a different sense to the last verb ; I will set him in safety, and do it openly ; with which in substance the Chaldee and Syriac agree. Luther renders : "I will effect help, that man may learn to trust." Gesenius, "I will place him in safety who sighs after it."

6. *Furnace of earth, or crucible.* The uncertain etymology of the Hebrew word, which occurs nowhere else, has occasioned this rendering to be much contested by modern critics. Its general purport is, however, supported by the ancient versions ; but *earth* may perhaps more properly be connected with the silver, rather than the furnace ; *as silver tried in a furnace, purified from earth [or dross] seven times.* Anglo-Saxon version :—"Seofon sithon amered syththan se ora adolfen bythi : " seven times refined after the ore is dug.



8 The wicked walk on every side,  
When the vilest men are exalted.

### PSALM XIII.

To the chief Musician [*or, overseer*]. A Psalm of David.

Supposed by some to have been composed by David when in captivity, or suffering a long and harassing persecution from Saul; others refer it to the Babylonish captivity. Its individual character with the Hebrew title is in favour of the former view. It consists of three parts, the first (v. 1, 2), a complaint; the second (v. 3, 4), a supplication; and the third (v. 5, 6), expression of confidence in the Divine mercy. The last part comprises a couplet followed by a single hemistich, to which, however, the Septuagint adds a parallel line, making the couplet complete, thus:—

“I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me,  
And I will sing psalms to the name of the Lord most high.”

The genuineness of this line is maintained by some critics, but the mark of doubtful authenticity is affixed to it, and it may have been inserted from Ps. vii. 17, to supply a supposed deficiency.

1 HOW long wilt thou forget me, O LORD ? for ever ?

How long wilt thou hide thy face from me ?

2 How long shall I take counsel in my soul,

*Having* sorrow in my heart daily ?

How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me ?

3 Consider *and* hear me, O LORD my God :

Lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the *sleep* of death ;

4 Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him ;

*And* those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.

5 But I have trusted in thy mercy ;

My heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.

6 I will sing unto the LORD,

Because he hath dealt bountifully with me.

---

8. Expositors, both ancient and modern, have explained these words very differently. Perhaps the best mode of rendering the whole verse is as follows:—

The wicked stalk about on every side

When the vileness of the sons of men is extolled.

“When vice is rewarded with public honours, the wicked behave themselves arrogantly.”—*Phillips*.

PSALM xiii. 3. *Lighten mine eyes*. A phrase denoting refreshment or restoration to health or strength.—See 1 Sam. xiv. 27–29.

PSALM XIV.

To the chief Musician. *A Psalm of David.*

See Psalm liii., which, with some variations, is the same as this. Verse 3, and portions of verses 1 and 2, are cited by the apostle (Rom. iii. 10–12) in support of the doctrine of the general depravity of mankind. Some MSS. of the Septuagint, and one or two Hebrew ones, as well as the Latin Vulgate, add here the remaining passages cited in the Epistle to verse 18, but the insertion of them here is manifestly an interpolation from thence, where the quotation consists of various detached passages of the Old Testament.

- 1 THE fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God.*  
They are corrupt, they have done abominable works,  
*There is none that doeth good.*
- 2 The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of  
men,  
To see if there were any that did understand,  
*And seek God.*
- 3 They are all gone aside,  
They are *all* together become filthy :  
*There is none that doeth good, no, not one.*
- 4 Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge,  
Who eat up my people *as* they eat bread,  
*And call not upon the LORD ?*
- 5 There were they in great fear :  
For God *is* in the generation of the righteous.
- 6 Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor,  
Because the LORD *is* his refuge.
- 7 Oh that the salvation of Israel *were come* out of Zion !  
When the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people,  
Jacob shall rejoice, *and* Israel shall be glad.

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PSALM xiv. 6. *Because*, rather *although* or *but* ; for v. 5 and 6—Ps. liii. 6, reads :—“There were they in great fear, where no fear was, for God hath scattered the bones of him that encampeth against thee ; thou hast put them to shame because God hath despised them.”

## PSALM XV.

A Psalm of David.

Psalm xv. bears a strong resemblance to Psalm xxiv., and like it, was probably composed on the removal of the ark to Mount Zion, David taking occasion of that event to inculcate the necessity of vital and practical religion in the professed worshippers of God.

- 1 LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle ?  
Who shall dwell in thy holy hill ?
- 2 He that walketh uprightly,  
And worketh righteousness,  
And speaketh the truth in his heart.
- 3 *He that* backbiteth not with his tongue,  
Nor doeth evil to his neighbour,  
Nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.
- 4 In whose eyes a vile person is contemned ;  
But he honoureth them that fear the LORD.  
*He that* sweareth to *his own* hurt, and changeth not.
- 5 *He that* putteth not out his money to usury,  
Nor taketh reward against the innocent.  
He that doeth these *things* shall never be moved.

## PSALM XVI.

Michtam [*or*, a golden *Psalm*] of David.

- 1 PRESERVE me, O God :  
For in thee do I put my trust.

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PSALM xv. 3. Our translators render two different Hebrew words by the same English term, *neighbour*. The verse would stand more correctly—

He that backbiteth or [*slandereth*] not with his tongue,  
Nor doeth evil to his *friend*,  
Nor bringeth reproach upon his neighbour.

4. *His own hurt*. The original is ambiguous, and may be rendered to *his friend*: so the Septuagint and Vulgate. But the former is decidedly preferable, and supported by the parallel passage (Lev. v. 4), to which this obviously refers.

- 2 *O my soul*, thou hast said unto the LORD, Thou *art* my Lord :  
My goodness *extendeth* not to thee ;
- 3 *But* to the saints that *are* in the earth,  
And to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.
- 4 Their sorrows shall be multiplied *that* hasten *after* another  
god :  
Their drink offerings of blood will I not offer,  
Nor take up their names into my lips.
- 5 The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup :  
Thou maintainest my lot.
- 6 The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant *places* ;  
Yea, I have a goodly heritage.
- 7 I will bless the LORD who hath given me counsel :

PSALM xvi. 2. The latter clause of this verse is obscure, and of the various modes of rendering it, our translators seem to have chosen the most unmeaning. Heb. *Al, incumbent on. My good, i.e., prosperity, or being prosperous, lies or is incumbent by no means [as a duty] on thee.* He had just said *She (i.e., his soul or Zion, perhaps) hath said of Jehovah, Thou art supreme Lord.* Lee, on Job xxxiv. 23., reads, "*Upon man, i.e., incumbent on him or his duty.*" Some translate, *My goodness is not profitable to thee.* Others give to the preposition, the sense of *without* or *besides*, which perhaps is the best. *My goodness is not [anything] without thee.*—I am indebted to thee for every blessing I enjoy. Similar to this are the Chaldee and Syriac.—*Thou art my highest good.* In the previous clause some MSS. and most of the ancient versions read the verb in the first person, *I said*, which obviates the ellipsis supplied by the words, *O my soul.*

3. Verse 3, expressing the Psalmist's sympathy with the true worshippers of God, seems best separated as it is by most translators from the preceding. Literally—*As for the saints that are in the earth, they and the excellent, all my delight is in them.*

4. *Blood* is mentioned as characteristic of the drink offerings of the heathen, being mixed with, or substituted for wine in their libations.

5. *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, &c.* What the Lord gives, that alone do I seek, and with it I am content. The phrase is elsewhere used in reference to the Levites, who could acquire no inheritance with the other tribes.

6. *The lines or boundaries* : In allusion to the division of the promised land by line.

7. *My reins.* My inward meditations and secret thoughts. The Jews

- My reins also instruct me in the night seasons.  
 8 I have set the LORD always before me :  
 Because *he is* at my right hand, I shall not be moved.  
 9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth :  
 My flesh also shall rest in hope.  
 10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell ;

regarded not only the heart in common with mankind generally, but also other internal parts of the body as seats of the various passions and emotions of the mind. Thus, the reins or kidneys, from their retired situation, are used (frequently in combination with the heart) to express the most secret workings of the soul.

9. This verse affords another instance of this phraseology in the word rendered *glory*. The radical meaning of the Hebrew is *heavy*, and from this idea many others are derived, both in a good and bad sense. Among the former are, weight of character, honour, glory ; also the *liver*, as the heaviest or most important of the viscera. In the present case the context requires that some part of the body should be designated as a parallelism to *heart* in the previous clause, and the Seventy, followed by many other translators, accordingly render it *my tongue*, the member which, by being identified with the power of speech, expresses the glory of man above the brute creation. There is, however, no good authority for assigning this meaning to the Hebrew word, the proper literal rendering of which in this place appears to be *my liver*, and the sense intended would be correctly expressed by *my soul*. (See Gen. xlix. 6.) *My flesh shall rest in hope* ; rather, *security*.

10. *Thou wilt not leave, or give up, my soul in hell*. The Hebrew preposition signifies properly *to*, not *in*. Soul is frequently used in Hebrew where we should employ the personal pronoun, or in the sense of person, as in Num. xv. 30, 31 ; Josh. x. 28, 30, 32, &c., &c. ; with us in such phrases as, "The vessel sank, and every soul on board perished." *Hell*, from the Saxon *hullan* or *helan*, to *hide* ; or from *holl*, a *cavern*, though now used only for the place of torment, anciently denoted the *concealed* or *unseen* place of the dead in general ; corresponding to the Greek *ἀδης*, i.e., *ὁ ἀειδὴς τόπος*, the *invisible place*, and the Hebrew *she'öl*, from *sha'äl*, to *ask, seek*, the place and state of those who are out of the way and to be sought for.—B.C.B. The Hebrew *she'öl* denotes simply the grave, or the place of the dead, without reference to happiness or misery. This passage would, therefore, be correctly rendered : *Thou wilt not give me up* [or my life or person] *to the grave*. In the sense of prolongation of life, or figuratively of relief from calamity or distress, this might be said of the Psalmist himself, but it is applied by the Apostles in a much higher, as well as more literal sense, to Christ and His

Neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

11 Thou wilt show me the path of life :

In thy presence *is* fulness of joy ;

At thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore.

# PSALM XVII.

A Prayer of David.

Psalm xvii. is considered to have been composed by David, during Saul's bitterest persecution. In several particulars it bears a strong resemblance to Psalm xvi.

1 HEAR the right, O LORD,

Attend unto my cry,

Give ear unto my prayer,

*That goeth* not out of feigned lips.

2 Let my sentence come forth from thy presence ;

Let thine eyes behold the things that are equal.

3 Thou hast proved mine heart ;

Thou hast visited *me* in the night ;

Thou hast tried me, *and* shalt find nothing ;

I am purposed *that* my mouth shall not transgress.

4 Concerning the works of men,

By the word of thy lips

I have kept *me from* the paths of the destroyer

5 Hold up my goings in thy paths,

*That* my footsteps slip not.

resurrection. *Thine Holy One.* The printed Hebrew text and some MSS. read this word in the plural, but the evidence preponderates in favour of the singular. The modern Jews support the former, for the sake of impugning the testimony of this passage to Christ.

PSALM xvii. 3 and 4 are by some connected thus : *I have purposed that my mouth shall not transgress, in consequence of the works of men* [the machinations of my enemies] *against the word of thy lips* ; or, *that my mouth may not speak according to the ways of men, &c.* But the common rendering seems on the whole preferable, as best supported by the Hebrew, and affording at least as good a sense. *As for the works of men,* [the plots of my enemies, or the example of the wicked] *by the word of thy lips* [by regarding thy precepts], *I have watched so* [as to avoid] *the paths of the destroyer.*

- 6 I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God :  
Incline thine ear unto me, *and hear* my speech.
- 7 Shew thy marvellous lovingkindness,  
O thou that savest by thy right hand  
Them which put their trust *in thee*  
From those that rise up *against them*.
- 8 Keep me as the apple of the eye,  
Hide me under the shadow of thy wings,
- 9 From the wicked that oppress me,  
*From my deadly enemies, who compass me about.*
- 10 They are enclosed in their own fat :  
With their mouth they speak proudly.
- 11 They have now compassed us in our steps :  
They have set their eyes bowing down to the earth ;
- 12 Like as a lion *that is greedy of his prey,*

7. This verse is variously rendered, but there seems no sufficient ground for deviating from our common version.

8. *Keep me as the apple of the eye.* A beautiful comparison, derived from the provision in nature for the protection of this delicate and important organ, the Hebrew name for which is very expressive—the *little man of the eye*—because a person opposite sees in it a miniature image of himself. It is also called *the daughter of the eye*, but in the present instance the two phrases are combined, *the little one, daughter of the eye*. The same idea prevails in other languages, as the Greek *κορη*, and Latin *pupilla*, from whence our word *pupil*, little maid or damsel.

10. Houbigant and others, by a transposition of two Hebrew letters, would read, *They have closed their NET upon me*, as more suitable to the phraseology of the preceding and two subsequent verses. This alteration, however, is quite unsupported by any Hebrew MS. or ancient version, and less suitable to the immediate context than the usual reading, the subject of this verse being the character of David's enemies ; and a similar mode of expression is elsewhere used (see Psalms lxxiii. 7–9, cxix. 70 ; Deut. xxxii. 15 ; Is. vi. 10) to denote a state of outward prosperity combined with moral or spiritual insensibility.

11. *They have set their eyes bowing down to the earth.* The conduct of David's enemies, probably Saul and his emissaries watching for an opportunity to destroy him, is compared to that of a huntsman tracking the footsteps of his game, and laying snares to take it.—See this copiously illustrated in Dr. A. Clarke's note.

12. Extends the comparison to a lion in search of his prey.

And as it were a young lion lurking in secret places.

- 13 Arise, O LORD,  
Disappoint him, cast him down :  
Deliver my soul from the wicked, *which is thy sword* :  
14 From men, *which are thy hand*, O LORD,  
From men of the world, *which have their portion in this life*,  
And whose belly thou fillest with thy hid *treasure* :  
They are full of children,  
And leave the rest of their *substance* to their babes.  
15 As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness :  
I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

13 and 14. Some translators supply a preposition before *thy sword* and *thy hand*—*Deliver my soul from the wicked by thy sword, from men by thy hand* ; but the common version, taking those words in apposition with the preceding, is more literal, and accords with other passages, where the wicked are represented as a scourge in the hand of God for executing His righteous purposes.

14. The word *this*, inserted by the translators, seems to carry the idea rather further than the original warrants : *whose portion is in life* ; whose desires centre in a long and prosperous life, with which the Psalmist in the next verse contrasts his own desire for the Divine approbation and blessing.

15. Is variously expounded. Many refer it to a future state, and the awaking to a resurrection from the dead ; others to the manifestation of the Psalmist's integrity, and his restoration to the sensible enjoyment of God's favour in this life. Those who adopt this as the general sense are, however, divided as to the precise import of the whole, or of particular parts. Some consider the Psalmist as uttering an evening hymn, and expressing his confidence that when he awakes from sleep the Lord will grant his petition, and give him the assurance of His favour and protection ; others take it in a figurative sense, as denoting a return from a state of exile to worship in the tabernacle, there to behold the Lord's face, (an expression considered equivalent to "appearing before him"—Ex. xxiii. 17, &c.) an awaking from a state of danger and distress, to one of Divine consolation. The last line admits also of considerable diversity of rendering. Most translators supply what they deem two ellipses in the Hebrew, by the insertion of the first pronoun with the verb *awake*, and a preposition, *with* or *in*, before *thy likeness* ; the former, as in our version, connecting it with *satisfied* (the intermediate words being parenthetical), or the latter with the preceding, *when I awake in thy likeness*. As this word is parallel with *thy face* in the previous line both denoting by different expressions the Divine presence, the



## PSALM XVIII.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David, the servant of the LORD, who spake unto the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul: and he said,

The occasion of this Psalm is stated in the title, and in 2 Sam. xxii., with which it is in substance identical, yet with numerous verbal differences. A few of these may have arisen from accident on the part of transcribers, but the generality of them were no doubt designedly made either by David himself, on revising his own composition, or by the varying taste of subsequent editors. Their existence at an early period is proved by the general uniformity, in these respects, of the Hebrew text and the ancient versions. In some instances, the reading of one copy seems decidedly preferable, and in others, that of the other, while in others again both appear equally appropriate and beautiful. Taken as a whole, the copy in the book of Psalms appears to be superior to the other. For a table of the variations in the original texts, see Phillips (Psalms in Hebrew), and for remarks critical and explanatory upon them, see Hengstenberg's Notes to his Commentary on Psalm xviii. In this sublime ode, composed probably soon after his establishment in the full and peaceful possession of his kingdom, the royal Psalmist celebrates, in the most exalted strains of thanksgiving and praise, his deliverance from his enemies, and especially from Saul, who had been his most bitter and inveterate foe. "This," remarks Hengstenberg, "was too important not to be especially referred to. It was the first of the whole. It was by what he experienced in these necessities that his faith in God's fatherly care first developed itself; and in all his subsequent difficulties David's mind always threw itself back upon those experiences which formed the basis of his inward life. That deliverance was for him, the same as the redemption out of Egypt was for Israel."

- 1 I WILL love thee, O LORD, my strength.
- 2 The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer ;  
My God, my strength, in whom I will trust ;  
My buckler, and the horn of my salvation,  
And my high tower.

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former seems preferable of the two. The Septuagint, however, and several other ancient versions, render the clause, *I shall be satisfied with the awaking* [or appearing] *of thy likeness* [or glory], and this being a literal version, without any addition to the Hebrew text, seems to have the best claim to adoption. The Greek of the Seventy is thus Anglicised by Thomson—"But as for me, let me appear righteous before thee; let me be satisfied with a display of thy glory"—which, though not a literal version either of the Greek or the original Hebrew, seems to convey the genuine sense and spirit of both.

- 3 I will call upon the LORD, *who is worthy to be praised* :  
So shall I be saved from mine enemies.
- 4 The sorrows of death compassed me,  
And the floods of ungodly men made me afraid.
- 5 The sorrows of hell compassed me about :  
The snares of death prevented me.
- 6 In my distress I called upon the LORD,  
And cried unto my God :  
He heard my voice out of his temple,  
And my cry came before him, *even into his ears.*
- 7 Then the earth shook and trembled ;

PSALM xviii. 3. *I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised.* Some translators read the last word as an active particle connecting with the verb in the first person, which in the Hebrew it immediately precedes. *Praising, I will call upon the Lord.*

4. The reading of 2 Sam. xxii. 5—*waves*—seems more appropriate to the succeeding clause than that of the Psalm, *sorrows* or *ords*, which some suppose to have been inserted by an error of the transcriber from the next verse ; but this may have been the original reading, and the other a subsequent emendation.

4 and 5. *Sorrows of death, sorrows of hell, or the grave.* The primary meaning of the former word, *ords*, seems here to be more appropriate than *sorrows* or *pains*, which it often signifies. The Psalmist is describing the imminent perils from which he had been delivered, and represents death, or the grave, “under the image of a hunter from whom the animal can no longer escape when the fatal net has been thrown over it.”—*Hengstenberg*.

7. The imagery in this and the succeeding verses is universally admired for its unrivalled grandeur. “David describes, by the sublimest expressions and grandest terms, the majesty of God, and the awful manner in which He came to his assistance. The imagery is borrowed from an awful and tremendous thunder storm ; and the circumstances are such as to create the utmost admiration, excite a kind of horror, and far exceed in sublimity everything of the kind to be found in any remains of heathen antiquity.”—*B.C.B.* See remarks more at length in Phillips, A. Clarke, and other commentators. “It does not appear from any part of David’s history that there was any such storm as here described, which proved destructive to his enemies, and salutary to himself. There might indeed have been such an one, though there is no particular mention of it, unless it may be thought that something of this nature is intimated in the account of his second battle with the

The foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken,  
Because he was wroth.

8 There went up a smoke out of his nostrils,  
And fire out of his mouth devoured :  
Coals were kindled by it.

9 He bowed the heavens also, and came down :  
And darkness was under his feet.

10 And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly :

Philistines.—2 Sam. v. 23, 24. The storm is, however, represented as real, though David in describing it has heightened and embellished it with all the ornaments of poetry."

8. *Coals were kindled by it.* Rather, *Burning coals therefrom consumed.*

9. "Jehovah is here represented as a mighty warrior going forth to fight the battles of David. When He descended to the engagement, the very heavens bowed to render His descent more awful. His military tent was substantial darkness; the voice of His thunder was the warlike alarm which sounded to the battle; the chariot in which He rode was the thick clouds of heaven, conducted by cherubs, and carried on by the irresistible force and rapid wings of an impetuous tempest; and the darts and weapons He employed were thunder-bolts, lightnings, fiery hail, deluging rains, and stormy winds. No wonder that when God arose all His enemies were scattered, and those that hated Him fled before Him."—B.C.B.

10. Dr. A. Clarke gives the Hebrew of this verse in English characters, and directs attention to the correspondence it exhibits between sense and sound.

"Wayir kab-al kerub, wa-ya-oph,

Wa-yai de al kanphai ru-ach."

"And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly,  
And soared upon the wings of the wind."

The flap of the wing, the agitation, and rush through the air, are strikingly represented in the last word of each hemistich, as the roar and hissing of the waves in the celebrated line of Homer (*Iliad*, book 1, line 34), which I subjoin in English letters:—

"Bē d'akeñ para thina poluphloisboio thalassēs."

But walked silent along the shore of the loud-roaring (or much-sounding) sea.

"The cherub is an image of the creature in its highest form, an ideal creature. The powers of life, which are divided among the creatures that occupy the highest place in the visible creation, are in it combined and

- Yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind.
- 11 He made darkness his secret place ;  
His pavilion round about him *were* dark waters *and* thick  
clouds of the skies.
- 12 At the brightness *that was* before him  
His thick clouds passed,  
Hail *stones* and coals of fire.
- 13 The LORD also thundered in the heavens,  
And the Highest gave his voice ;  
Hail *stones* and coals of fire.
- 14 Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them ;  
And he shot out lightnings and discomfited them.
- 15 Then the channels of waters were seen, .  
And the foundations of the world were discovered  
At thy rebuke, O LORD,  
At the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.
- 16 He sent from above, he took me,  
He drew me out of many waters.
- 17 He delivered me from my strong enemy,  
And from them which hated me :  
For they were too strong for me.
- 18 They prevented me in the day of my calamity :  
But the LORD was my stay.
- 19 He brought me forth also into a large place ;  
He delivered me, because he delighted in me.
- 20 The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness ;  
According to the cleanness of my hands hath he recom-  
pensed me.
- 21 For I have kept the ways of the LORD,  
And have not wickedly departed from my God.

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individualized. That the Lord was borne upon the cherub, must signify that He came in the fulness of His divine majesty and glory."—*Hengstenberg*.

20—24. "David must be here asserting the purity of his conduct with reference to Saul, or others of his particular enemies, towards whom he had always acted in the kindest, the most upright, and the most candid manner ;

- 22 For all his judgments *were* before me,  
And I did not put away his statutes from me.
- 23 I was also upright before him,  
And I kept myself from mine iniquity.
- 24 Therefore hath the LORD recompensed me  
According to my righteousness,  
According to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight.
- 25 With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful ;  
With an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright ;
- 26 With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure ;  
And with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward.
- 27 For thou wilt save the afflicted people ;

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and not the entire spotlessness of his general character, which, we know, was unhappily stained by the commission of a series of very heavy offences."—*Phillips*. This Psalm was probably written before the occurrence of those lamentable events. In reply to the objection of self-righteousness, to which this passage is supposed to be open, Hengstenberg remarks, "First—Righteousness forms a contrast not to infirmity, but to wickedness. Second—David owed this only to his faithful and inward adherence to God, who kept his servant from the ungodly that they might not reign over him. Third—The ground on which David here so presses his righteousness is not a bepraising of self, but the design of inspiring others also with zeal for the fulfilment of the law." "By the words—from *mine iniquity*, i.e., from the iniquity into which I might so readily have fallen, David shows that he is not a spotless saint, but a sinner who had to defend himself by watchfulness and conflict." "Much significance is cast on the words by the narrative, 1 Sam. xxiv., particularly v. 5. We see here how near the sin lay to him, but at the same time how he kept himself from it."

25 and 26. The Psalmist, passing from the particular to the general, "intimates that the plan of God's providential conduct to men is to act towards them as they act towards each other. This is an undoubted principle of His moral government, and ought to constitute a strong motive for the exercise of all Christian virtues in the social relations of life."—*Phillips*. *With the froward thou wilt show thyself froward*. In the Hebrew the two words are not, as in the previous clauses, identical. More correctly—*With the froward, or perverse, thou wilt wrestle*. "Thou wilt follow him through all his windings, trace him through all his crooked ways, untwist him in all his cunning wiles, and defeat all his schemes of stubbornness, fraud, overreaching, and deceit."—*A. Clarke*.

27. *The afflicted* ; "rather, *the humble people* : for the contrast

But wilt bring down high looks.

28 For thou wilt light my candle :

The LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.

29 For by thee I have run through a troop :

And by my God have I leaped over a wall.

30 *As for* God, his way is perfect :

The word of the LORD is tried :

He is a buckler to all those that trust in him.

31 For who is God save the LORD ?

Or who is a rock save our God ?

32 *It is* God that girdeth me with strength,

And maketh my way perfect.

33 He maketh my feet like hinds' feet,

And setteth me upon my high places.

34 He teacheth my hands to war,

So that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.

35 Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation :

And thy right hand hath holden me up,

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between this and *high looks* shews that *humility* rather than *suffering* is intended."—B.C.B.

28. "As darkness is a usual metaphor for trouble or affliction, hence, to *light the lamp* for any one means to restore to prosperity."—B.C.B.

29. *Run through*; rather, *broken* or *routed a troop*.—See Phillips and Rosenmüller.

34. "All the versions read, 'And thou hast made my arms as a bow of brass;' evidently reading *נִתְּתָהּ* (*nathattah*) *thou hast given, or made*, instead of *נִתְּתָהּ* (*nichathah*) *is broken*, and *nechooshah* is certainly not *steel*, but *brass*, of which arms were anciently made."—B.C.B. I prefer Luther's translation of this verse to any other:

"He teacheth my hands to war,

And my arms to stretch (or bend) the bow of brass."

What induced our translators in this, and one or two other instances, to substitute steel for brass, the usual rendering of a Hebrew word of very frequent occurrence, seems quite unaccountable. The manufacture of steel was probably unknown in David's days. That of brass appears to have been much more ancient.

35. *Gentleness*; or *kindness*. "With thy meekness thou hast multiplied me."—B.C.B. The precise meaning of the word is doubtful. The ancient interpreters give the sense of chastening or disciplining. Luther—"When

- And thy gentleness hath made me great.
- 86 Thou hast enlarged my steps under me,  
That my feet did not slip.
- 87 I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them :  
Neither did I turn again till they were consumed.
- 88 I have wounded them that they were not able to rise :  
They are fallen under my feet.
- 89 For thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle :  
Thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me.
- 40 Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies ;  
That I might destroy them that hate me.
- 41 They cried, but *there was* none to save *them* :  
*Even* unto the LORD, but he answered them not.
- 42 Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind :  
I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets.
- 48 Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people :  
*And* thou hast made me the head of the heathen :  
A people *whom* I have not known shall serve me.
- 44 As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me :  
The strangers shall submit themselves unto me.
- 45 The strangers shall fade away,  
And be afraid out of their close places.
- 46 The LORD liveth ; and blessed *be* my rock ;  
And let the God of my salvation be exalted.
- 47 *It is* God that avengeth me,  
And subdueth the people under me.

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thou humblest me, thou makest me great." Hengstenberg—"Thy lowliness [condescension] makes me great."

45. *Be afraid out of their close places.* Run with trembling from their holds or places of concealment, when no longer calculated to afford them protection.

46. *The Lord liveth.* Some consider this phrase the usual acclamation to the king transferred to God, see 1 Sam. x. 24, 2 Sam. xvi. 16, &c., but in those passages the imperative or optative form is used ; *Let the king live*, which, presupposing the possibility of dying, would not be applicable to the Deity. The expression here is simply, *Jehovah liveth* ; or, *living is Jehovah* ; declaratory of the Divine attribute—self-existent and life-giving.

- 48 He delivereth me from mine enemies :  
 Yea thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me :  
 Thou hast delivered me from the violent man.
- 49 Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the  
 heathen,  
 And sing praises unto thy name.
- 50 Great deliverance giveth he to his king ;  
 And sheweth mercy to his anointed,  
 To David, and to his seed for evermore.

# PSALM XIX.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

"A description of the glory of God in creation, introduces the praise of the glory of the law, derived from the same Divine source ; and this again serves the Psalmist only as a ladder to reach his proper aim, the prayer for pardon and moral preservation."—*Hengstenberg*.

- 1 THE heavens declare the glory of God ;  
 And the firmament sheweth his handywork.
- 2 Day unto day uttereth speech,  
 And night unto night sheweth knowledge.

49. This verse is applied by the apostle (Rom. xv. 9) to the promulgation of the gospel ; and many of the fathers, as well as modern commentators, have interpreted the whole Psalm as a prophecy of the passion and spiritual victories of Christ. "As David was a type of Christ," remarks A. Clarke, "many things spoken of him *primarily*, refer to our Lord *ultimately* ; but much judgment and caution are required in their application." The attempt on the part of some to set aside in this Psalm all personal reference to David, and apply every particular to the Messiah, is not only at variance with the historic record, but "often derogatory from the majesty of Christ." Verse 23, especially, is quite inconsistent with the sinless character of the Redeemer. The difficulty, as respects this particular verse, would indeed be obviated by the adoption of a reading found in some Hebrew MSS., collected by Dr. Kennicott, which would substitute *iniquities* for *my iniquity* ; but the common reading has unquestionably the best claim to be considered genuine.

PSALM xix. 1. *His handywork.* The literal rendering, *the works of his hand*, would read much more dignified.

2. *Uttereth.* The Hebrew is very emphatic ; literally, *poureth forth*.



- 3 *There is no speech nor language,  
Where their voice is not heard.*
- 4 *Their line is gone out through all the earth,  
And their words to the end of the world.  
In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,*
- 5 *Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,  
And rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.*
- 6 *His going forth is from the end of the heaven,  
And his circuit unto the ends of it :  
And there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.*

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3. Our common version gives a beautiful and appropriate sense, and is countenanced by the Septuagint, but is generally rejected as not justified by the Hebrew. The correct rendering appears to be as given in *B.C.B.*, "without these their voice is heard," the sense of which is well expressed in the last stanza of Addison's paraphrase—

"What though in solemn silence all  
Move round this dark terrestrial ball ;  
What though *no real voice nor sound*,  
Amid their radiant orbs be found ;  
In reason's ear they all rejoice,  
And utter forth a glorious voice ;  
For ever singing as they shine,  
The hand that made us is Divine."

"They have no speech nor words, nor is their voice heard, yet into all the earth hath gone out their sound, and to the extremity of the world their words."—*B.C.B.*

4. *Their line.* The version of the Seventy, quoted Rom. x. 18, is reconciled with the Hebrew *rule* or *direction*, on the supposition that the word signifies a musical chord, or the sound emitted by it ; but in every other instance it denotes a *measuring line*, which in this passage would convey the idea of *extent of territory—jurisdiction* ; a meaning not less appropriate to the context than the version of the Seventy.

5. The allusion here is explained by some as in the parable of the ten virgins, to the bridegroom's procession on the nuptial evening, with torches and music, but the Psalmist seems rather to have in view a morning scene, comparing the rising sun to a bridegroom, one in the full vigour and enjoyment of life going forth on the nuptial morning, or perhaps springing from his repose to the labours of the day. *As a strong man to run a race* ; rather, *his course*. The Hebrew does not necessarily denote a race, but simply *course* or *way*.

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- 7 The law of the LORD is perfect,  
 Converting the soul :  
 The testimony of the LORD is sure,  
 Making wise the simple.
- 8 The statutes of the LORD are right,  
 Rejoicing the heart :  
 The commandment of the LORD is pure,  
 Enlightening the eyes.
- 9 The fear of the LORD is clean,  
 Enduring for ever :  
 The judgments of the Lord are true  
 And righteous altogether :
- 10 More to be desired are they than gold,  
 Yea, than much fine gold :  
 Sweeter also than honey  
 And the honeycomb.
- 11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned :  
 And in keeping of them there is great reward.
- 12 Who can understand his errors ?  
 Cleanse thou me from secret faults.
- 13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins ;  
 Let them not have dominion over me :
- 

10. *The honeycomb.* Our translators have inserted the correct rendering in the margin, *the dropping of honeycombs*; the pure liquid honey as it distils from the comb. There is no sweetness in the comb itself.—See on Psalm cxix. 103.

12. *From secret faults*; rather, *from those which are secret*; the adjective being without a noun, and referring to *errors* in the previous clause. "Since the failings are so numerous and delicate that none can mark them all, free me from those concealed sins, which by their very fineness render their entire extirpation impossible."—Hengstenberg.

13. *Presumptuous sins.* Here also the adjective is without a noun, and being, where it elsewhere occurs, used in reference to persons (rendered *the proud*) some understand it so in this instance; preserve me from the society of the wicked, or the dominion of those who would lead me into the great transgression—idolatry; but this seems inapposite to the scope of the passage, which is a prayer for preservation from internal, not external

- Then shall I be upright,  
 And I shall be innocent from the great transgression.  
 14 Let the words of my mouth,  
 And the meditation of my heart,  
 Be acceptable in thy sight,  
 O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

## PSALM XX.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

Psalm xx. is ascribed by the title to David, who appears to have composed it for the public service as a prayer for the preservation and success of the king in his enterprises and dangers. It was probably chanted in alternate responses by the people, the king, and the priests, on occasion of offering sacrifices before going out to war; and the *Selah*, at verse 3, may indicate a suspension during the performance of the sacrifices. The latter portion expresses a confident anticipation of victory, founded on trust in God. "The Psalm seems to consist of the following parts:—The prayers of the *people* on behalf of the king, who had previously offered sacrifice, verses 1—3; of the *high priest*, verse 4; of *David* and his *attendants*, verse 5; of the *high priest* after the victim was consumed, verse 6; of *David* and his *men*, verse 7, 8; of the whole *congregation*, verses 9."—*B.C.B.*

- 1 THE LORD hear thee in the day of trouble;  
 The name of the God of Jacob defend thee.
- 2 Send thee help from the sanctuary,  
 And strengthen thee out of Zion.
- 3 Remember all thy offerings,  
 And accept thy burnt sacrifice. *Selah*.
- 4 Grant thee according to thine own heart,  
 And fulfil all thy counsel.
- 5 We will rejoice in thy salvation,  
 And in the name of our God we will set up *our* banners:  
 The LORD fulfil all thy petitions.
- 6 Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed:  
 He will hear him from his holy heaven  
 With the saving strength of his right hand.

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enemies. "Presumptuous sins are here personified as tyrants who strive to bring the servants of God into unbecoming subjection to them."—*Hengstenberg*.

- 7 Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses ;  
 But we will remember the name of the LORD our God.  
 8 They are brought down and fallen :  
 But we are risen and stand upright.  
 9 Save, LORD :  
 Let the king hear us when we call.

PSALM XXI.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

This Psalm is considered to be a thanksgiving for the victory prayed for in the preceding one; the occasion of both being supposed by many to have been the war with the Ammonites, recorded 2 Sam. x.; but a more correct view appears to be that it refers to the promises made to David through the prophet Nathan; which is thus stated by Hengstenberg. "The Psalmist expresses the thanksgivings of the people for the promises given to David in 2 Sam. vii., and their joyful hope in regard to the fulfilment of these. His aim is to call forth and quicken in the mind of the Church a feeling of gratitude towards the Lord, of love towards His anointed, of immovable confidence in the prospect of danger. The exclusively Messianic exposition, which has been defended by many of the older commentators, is opposed by the undeniable reference which the Psalm contains to 2 Sam. vii. This admits of the application to Christ only in so far as the promise found its last and highest fulfilment in Him, in whom the royal stem of David culminated; but at the same time imperiously demands the reference to Christ in this sense." It has been applied to the Messiah by many eminent Jewish critics, and the Chaldee Targum renders *king*, in verses 1 and 7, *King Messiah*. The Psalm consists of three parts. In the first, which is addressed to God, the people testify their joy at the rich benefits He has bestowed upon their king, verses 1—7. In the second they address the king, expressing their assurance founded on his trust in God (verse 7) of his prevailing over his enemies, verses 8—12. The third is a closing ascription of praise to God,—verse 13.

- 1 THE king shall joy in thy strength, O LORD ;  
 And in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice !

PSALM XX. 9. *The king*. It seems better, with most of the ancient versions, to connect these words with the preceding clause, "O Jehovah, save the king; answer us when we call upon thee," or—

"Jehovah hath saved the king,  
 He will hear us when we call;"

which is more strictly in accordance with the Hebrew.

- 2 Thou hast given him his heart's desire,  
And hast not withholden the request of his lips. Selah.
- 3 For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness :  
Thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.
- 4 He asked life of thee,  
And thou gavest it him,  
Even length of days for ever and ever.
- 5 His glory is great in thy salvation :  
Honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him.
- 6 For thou hast made him most blessed for ever :  
Thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance.
- 7 For the king trusteth in the LORD,  
And through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved.
- 8 Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies :  
Thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.
- 9 Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven,  
In the time of thine anger :  
The LORD shall swallow them up in his wrath,  
And the fire shall devour them.
- 10 Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth,  
And their seed from among the children of men.
- 11 For they intended evil against thee :  
They imagined a mischievous device,  
Which they are not able to perform.

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PSALM xxi. 2. "The arrangement is certainly fine here, that the prayer of the heart must go before, without which the prayer of the lips is an unprofitable bawling."—*Luther*.

3. *Thou preventest him*. Thou showerest thy blessings upon him, even unasked and unexpected. The Hebrew word signifies simply *to come before*, *precede*, or *anticipate*, either in a friendly or hostile manner, more frequently the former. Such is also the primary signification of the English word *prevent*, though in modern parlance used only in the secondary sense of obstructing or hindering.

8. *Find out*. The Hebrew word followed, as it is here, by a preposition, carries the sense further, *find for*, that is, *be sufficient for*, *equal to encounter*.

12 Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back :

*When thou shalt make ready thine arrows upon thy strings  
against the face of them.*

13 Be thou exalted, LORD, in thine own strength :

*So will we sing and praise thy power.*

### PSALM XXII.

To the chief Musician upon Ajeleth Shahar. A Psalm of David.

Conjectures are various as to the idea intended to be conveyed by the words in the title, *Ajeleth Shahar*, the literal meaning of which appears to be *the hind of the morning*. "*Al ayyeleth hashshachar*, probably, at the beginning of the dawn, or the first appearance of light; for in this sense the Rabbins use the phrase, *ayyalta deshachara* (see Lightfoot on Mark xvi. 2, and Rosenmüller in loc.) the word, *ayyeleth*, probably being the same as the Chaldee *awla* and Arabic *awalat*, a beginning, from *awala*, to be first." —B.C.B. Some interpret the phrase as a morning song, or a fanciful title in the style of the Orientals, without reference to the subject, others as pointing out the subject—an emblem of innocence under suffering—an appellation of Christ, or an allusion to His resurrection at the dawn of day. But its connexion with *the chief musician*, as in other instances, seems most in favour of those who regard it as indicating some musical accompaniment. Commentators are not less divided in opinion as to the subject of the Psalm, whether it be the writer himself, the people of Israel, or wholly, or in part, the Messiah. Its decidedly individual character, and the portrait depicted of a righteous sufferer, are a sufficient refutation of the hypothesis which would apply it to the nation, whose sufferings were the punishment of its sins and apostasies. The ancient Jewish Church appears to have regarded the Psalm as prophetic of the Messiah; and some of the modern Jews, induced by a feeling of deference to the opinion of their ancestors to adopt a like mode of interpretation, yet anxious, at the same time, to evade the fulfilment of such prophecies in the person of Jesus Christ, and to reconcile them with their notions of a temporal prince, have invented the groundless theory of a second Messiah, who is to be poor and despised, and in whom will be fulfilled those portions of prophecy which they assert to be inapplicable to the first. The fact that the opening words of the Psalm were uttered by our Lord during the period of His crucifixion, and that several subsequent portions strikingly depict some of the attendant circumstances, has naturally led the generality of Christian commentators to expound it, in a greater or less degree, as a prophecy of Him, some entirely and exclusively so. Hengstenberg, from the difficulty, on the one hand, of finding any circumstances in the history of David, or of any other individual, as Hezekiah or Jeremiah, to whom the Psalm has been attributed, which

12. *Make them turn their back.* The precise meaning of the original is doubtful. The marginal rendering, *shoulder*, which is that of several translators, seems to give the best sense.

bear out the picture it presents of extreme and abject distress ; and on the other, of applying all its parts directly and exclusively to Christ, has brought forward a hypothesis which appears to him free from all embarrassments, and of which the following is a condensed statement :—" That David, on the groundwork of his own peculiarly rich and ample experience, composed this Psalm for the use of the Church, as a representation of the ideal character of the Righteous One ; describing His sufferings in this world, and the manifestation of the Divine glory in His deliverance. That every righteous man (as well as the community of the righteous) may appropriate its consolation, so far as the reality in himself embodies the idea ; but that it retained till the coming of Christ the character of an unfulfilled prophecy, every previous fulfilment pointing to one more perfect yet to come, and the whole receiving its full accomplishment in Him ; and that it would have been so fulfilled even without the special circumstances of resemblance, which however the Divine foreknowledge so directed, that the inward conformity might be rendered outwardly visible. That righteousness being represented as necessarily connected with the severest suffering from the enmity of the ungodly, and bound together with exalted deliverance, the inference is clear that the Messiah, if a righteous, must be a suffering One ; that salvation, in the highest and fullest sense, must be the lot of Him who should realize in perfection the idea of suffering righteousness ; and as the glory of God will be in proportion to the salvation vouchsafed, it must be in the time of the Messiah that this, in all its extent and depth, will be proclaimed." Notwithstanding the soundness of these views, there does not seem a necessity for resorting to the theory in support of which they are brought forward ; nor sufficient ground to set aside, on the one hand, all personal reference to the writer, or, on the other, the direct application of portions of the Psalm to Christ. Assuming, as the title states, and which there seems no reason to question, that it was composed by David, we may conclude that while describing in strong and sometimes figurative language his own feelings and condition of extreme depression, under circumstances which may not have been fully if at all recorded in the historical narrative, together with his gratitude for deliverance, he was led by the spirit of inspiration to employ language which was to have its full and most important realization in Him of whom David was at once a prophet and a type.

1 MY God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?

*Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring ?*

2 O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not ;  
And in the night season, and am not silent.

3 But thou *art* holy,

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PSALM xxii. 2. *And am not silent* : literally, *there is no silence or quiet to me*—nothing to silence my complaint. I obtain no relief : corresponding to, *Thou hearest not*, in the previous line.

3. The Seventy render thus : " But thou, the praise of Israel, dwellest in the sanctuary." This seems to afford a clearer sense, but does not accord with

- O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*
- 4 Our fathers trusted in thee :  
They trusted, and thou didst deliver them.
- 5 They cried unto thee, and were delivered :  
They trusted in thee, and were not confounded.
- 6 But I *am* a worm, and no man ;  
A reproach of men, and despised of the people.
- 7 All they that see me laugh me to scorn :  
They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying*,
- 8 He trusted on the Lord *that* he would deliver him :  
Let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.
- 9 But thou *art* he that took me out of the womb :  
Thou didst make me hope *when I was* upon my mother's  
breasts.
- 10 I was cast upon thee from the womb :  
Thou *art* my God from my mother's belly.
- 11 Be not far from me ;  
For trouble *is* near ;  
For *there is* none to help.
- 12 Many bulls have compassed me :  
Strong *bulls* of Bashan have beset me round.
- 13 They gaped upon me *with* their mouths,  
*As* a ravening and a roaring lion.
- 14 I am poured out like water,  
And all my bones are out of joint :

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the Hebrew so well as our version, of which the expression, *inhabitest the praises*, though peculiar, admits of an easy explanation ; inhabiting or enthroned on the ark or sanctuary, the place where the praises of the congregation were offered. The Psalmist pleads the holiness of God as an argument that He will not suffer innocence to be oppressed and iniquity to triumph. Ostervald renders, or rather paraphrases : *Tu habites au milieu d'Israel, qui célèbres tes louanges.*

9. The marginal rendering, *thou didst keep me in safety*, is preferable. The old versions render : *Thou hast been my hope or trust from my mother's breasts* (i.e. all my life long), which makes the line exactly parallel with the second line of v. 10, but does not appear to accord strictly with the present Hebrew text.



- My heart is like wax ;  
 It is melted in the midst of my bowels.  
 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd ;  
 And my tongue cleaveth to my jaws ;  
 And thou hast brought me into the dust of death.  
 16 For dogs have compassed me :  
 The assembly of the wicked have inclosed me :  
 They pierced my hands and my feet.  
 17 I may tell all my bones :  
 They look *and* stare upon me.  
 18 They part my garments among them,  
 And cast lots upon my vesture.  
 19 But be not thou far from me, O LORD :  
 O my strength, haste thee to help me.  
 20 Deliver my soul from the sword ;  
 My darling from the power of the dog.  
 21 Save me from the lion's mouth :  
 For thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.  
 22 I will declare thy name unto my brethren :

16. *They pierced my hands and my feet.* "The textual reading is <sup>לְכַרְכְּרִי</sup> (kaari) 'as a lion my hands and my feet,' but several MSS. read <sup>לְכַרְכְּרִי</sup> (karoo) which affords the reading adopted by our translators. So the Seventy, also the Vulgate, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic, so that there seems scarcely the shadow of a doubt that this is the genuine reading."—*B.C.B.* Those who adopt the reading, *as a lion*, fail in their attempts to make any tolerable sense of the passage, whether they refer the simile to the Psalmist or his enemies, for it is not the habit of lions to encircle their victim and seize his hands and feet, nor is this the mode of attacking a lion. 'Under these circumstances we seem bound to accept the reading of the ancient versions as transmitting the genuine sense of a passage which has been obscured in the original by the faults of transcribers, or by an unusual mode of orthography. The first part, at least, was strikingly fulfilled in the crucifixion of Christ; but whether his feet were nailed or tied to the cross is not stated, though the allusion to his feet in Luke xxiv. 39 seems in favour of the former supposition.

20. *My darling*; literally, *my only one*, dearest, not to be replaced; a poetical expression for the life or soul.

22. "Having become assured of his deliverance, the sufferer next paints the happy consequences to flow from it; first in regard to Israel, and then

- In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.
- 23 Ye that fear the LORD, praise him ;  
All ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him ;  
And fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.
- 24 For he hath not despised nor abhorred  
The affliction of the afflicted ;  
Neither hath he hid his face from him ;  
But when he cried unto him he heard.
- 25 My praise *shall be* of thee in the great congregation :  
I will pay my vows before them that fear him.
- 26 The meek shall eat and be satisfied :  
They shall praise the LORD that seek him :  
Your heart shall live for ever.
- 27 All the ends of the world  
Shall remember and turn unto the LORD :  
And all the kindreds of the nations  
Shall worship before thee.
- 28 For the kingdom *is* the LORD's :  
And he *is* the governor among the nations.
- 29 All *they that be* fat upon earth shall eat and worship :

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to the heathen," predictions which can receive their full accomplishment only in the universal dominion of the Messiah.

25 and 26. When a man offered the sacrifices which he had vowed in circumstances of distress, it was customary to invite to the covenant-feast his neighbours and acquaintances, together with the poor and strangers, the fatherless and widows, to whom he related the mercies of God to him, and made them partakers of his joy.—See Deut. xii. 17, 18. "The soul of the feast consisted in the entertainment given by the company to feelings of thankfulness and praise."—*Hengstenberg*. The Psalmist, expressing his gratitude in language derived from this source, invites the whole world to partake of the great spiritual feast. The Jewish commentator, Yarchi, remarks that "the period of this general rejoicing will be the time of our redemption in the days of our Messiah."—*Phillips*.

29. The last clause may be rendered : *And he who cannot keep alive his own soul*. "The removal of the distinction between Jew and Gentile is succeeded by the removal of the distinctions of conditions and circumstances."—*Hengstenberg*. "In this verse we have mankind divided into three classes, the rich, called the fat of the earth ; the poor, those descending to the dust

All they that go down to the dust shall bow before him :  
And none can keep alive his own soul.

30 A seed shall serve him ;

It shall be accounted to the LORD for a generation.

31 They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness  
Unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done *this*.

### PSALM XXIII.

A Psalm of David.

"In this Psalm we have an expression of David's faith in the goodness and mercy of God. He believes that through the Divine favour he shall live to a good old age prosperously and securely, and in the possession of all comfort. In his argument he uses two metaphors; the one taken from the guardianship which a vigilant shepherd exercises over his sheep who is anxious for their safety and welfare; and the other from a kind host who entertains his guest with the overflowing cup, and anoints him with sweet smelling oil, the usual emblems of plenty and prosperity, and consequently proofs of his benevolence and liberality."—*Phillips*. "Of all the figures that are applied to God in the Old Testament, that of a shepherd is the most beautiful."—*Hengstenberg*.

1 THE LORD is my shepherd ;  
I shall not want.

brought low by poverty and misery; and those who from affliction or any cause are not able to keep their soul alive, i.e., who are on the point of death."—*Phillips*. "The Vulgate has *my soul shall live to him, and my seed shall serve him*, with which agree the Seventy, Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, and Anglo-Saxon."—*B.C.B.* This reading would remove the third class, leaving simply the two classes of rich and poor as representing all mankind, while it displaces the next verse as well as the last clause of the present.

30. *It shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation, i.e., the righteous seed shall be established, and perpetuated before the Lord; or the clause may be rendered: It shall be recounted concerning the Lord to a generation (to come); or, It (the seed) shall recount concerning the Lord to a generation.* So Coverdale: *The seed shall serve him, and preach of the Lord for ever.*

31. *That he hath done this; or what he hath done.*

PSALM xxiii. 1. *I shall not want,—I shall want for nothing.* "The paraphrase of Paul Gerhard forms the best commentary on this verse: 'The Lord, who rules all the ends of the earth with His power, the fountain of eternal good, is my shepherd and guardian. So long as I have Him I am in want of no blessing; the riches of His fulness most thoroughly replenish me.'"—*Hengstenberg*.

- 2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures :  
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
- 3 He restoreth my soul, he leadeth me  
In the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
- 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil :  
For thou art with me ;  
Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
- 5 Thou preparest a table before me  
In the presence of mine enemies :  
Thou anointest my head with oil ;  
My cup runneth over.

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2. *Still waters.* Gently flowing streams, in opposition to a torrent, at which it would be difficult for sheep to drink. The Hebrew phrase, literally, *waters of quietness* or *rest*, seems to embrace also the idea of the "refreshing rest which shepherds, at the noon of a hot summer's day, give to their wearied flocks, by the side of a shady brook to which they have led them to drink."—*Hengstenberg.*

3. *For his name's sake* ; see note on Psalm xxxi. 3. "God's motives of conduct towards the children of men are derived from the perfections and goodness of His own nature."—*A. Clarke.* "What the Lord is and has done, gives the Psalmist a warrant to something which He is to do for him."—*Hengstenberg.*

4. *The valley of the shadow of death* appears to be a poetical description of a deep valley rendered gloomy and dangerous by precipices or overhanging rocks, dense foliage, and the presence of noxious animals. Under the emblem of a shepherd conducting his flock through such a valley, the Psalmist declares his confidence in the Divine preservation through the greatest dangers or the darkest dispensations that may await him. The general scope of the Psalm, and particularly the succeeding verses, mark this as the idea in the mind of the writer, rather than the actual period of dissolution, though the terms are no less appropriate to the latter. *Thy rod.* The Hebrew, like our English word, has various meanings, often that of a sceptre, and in this instance appears to denote the crook used by shepherds to lead and defend their sheep. An instrument of punishment, which it sometimes signifies, would be quite out of place here. Guidance, protection, and support are doubtless the ideas intended to be conveyed by the rod and staff.

- 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
 All the days of my life :  
 And I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

## PSALM XXIV.

A Psalm of David.

It seems most probable that this sublime ode was composed on the removal of the ark from the house of Obedom to the tabernacle which David had prepared for it on Mount Zion, and that it was sung in alternate responsive chorus on that joyful solemnity.—See 2 Sam. vi. 12–19. After an exordium declaring the extent of Jehovah's power and dominion, it describes, in terms similar to those of Psalm xv., who are His true worshippers, and concludes by celebrating the entrance of the Divine presence, symbolized by the ark, into the gates of Zion. In verse 7, the procession, as they approach, demand admission. This is followed by a question from those within, to which an answer is returned, and to add to the solemnity, the same proceeding is repeated, with a little variation in the expression.

- 1 THE earth is the LORD's and the fulness thereof ;  
 The world, and they that dwell therein.  
 2 For he hath founded it upon the seas,  
 And established it upon the floods.  
 3 Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD ?  
 Or who shall stand in his holy place ?  
 4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart ;  
 Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity,  
 Nor sworn deceitfully.  
 5 He shall receive the blessing from the LORD,  
 And righteousness from the God of his salvation.  
 6 This is the generation of them that seek him,

6. *And I will* (rather, *shall*) *dwell in the house of the Lord, i.e., enjoy His grace.*—See note on Psalm xxvii. 4. *For ever*; the Hebrew is *to length of days*; corresponding to *all the days of my life* in the preceding line.

PSALM xxiv. 4. *Who hath not lifted up his soul to vanity*; rather, *hath not set his heart on falsehood.*

6. *That seek thy face, O Jacob.* The Septuagint, Vulgate, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read, *the face of the God of Jacob*; and the Syriac, *thy face O God of Jacob*. There is an obvious incongruity in the passage as it stands in our Bible, and if we adhere to the present Hebrew text, it should be ren-

- That seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.
- 7 Lift up your heads, O ye gates ;  
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors ;  
And the King of glory shall come in.
- 8 Who is this King of glory ?  
The LORD strong and mighty,  
The LORD mighty in battle.
- 9 Lift up your heads, O ye gates ;  
Even lift *them* up, ye everlasting doors ;  
And the King of glory shall come in.
- 10 Who is this King of glory ?  
The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah.

PSALM XXV.

*A Psalm of David.*

This is one of the alphabetical Psalms, the others being Psalms xxxiv., xxxvii., cxl., cxli., cxix., and cxlv., in which each line or stanza begins with a different letter in the order of the Hebrew alphabet. "They are specimens of that acrostic mode of writing once so fashionable among the Jews. Other

dered: *Who seek thy face (are) Jacob, or, the generation of Jacob ; i.e., the true Israel, the genuine posterity of Jacob ; but there is an abruptness and obscurity in the mode of expression, which would be obviated by the adoption of the ancient versions ; though it seems extraordinary that so important a word should have been lost from the original text.*

7. *Lift up your heads, O ye gates !* The gates of Zion were probably constructed like the portcullis formerly used in town walls and fortifications, let down from and drawn up to the top of the gateway. *Everlasting, or, ancient doors.* "They might well be called ancient, for Jerusalem, with its strong Mount Zion, was in the time of Abraham a city of the Canaanites. With the Psalmist, whose object was to extol the worth of the gates for the purpose of enhancing the glory of the entrant, of whom after all they were unworthy, the idea of antiquity would easily expand into that of eternity," and it was within their precincts that the ark was to abide in perpetuity "What, in the first instance, is only a poetical figure, becomes, within the spiritual domain, a reality. What the external gates would have done if they had been endowed with reason, will in reality be performed by hearts capable of comprehending the majesty and glory of the approaching King." —Hengstenberg.

poetical artifices were likewise adopted. We find many instances of poems so constructed that a proper name or some particular sentiment would be expressed by the initial letters of the verses. The Cabalists were likewise fond of cross readings, and of extracting some mystery, wherever such readings could be found."—*Phillips*. In the present Psalm the verses commence with successive letters of the alphabet, but in both this and others the alphabetical order is sometimes disturbed. Some critics, attributing these deviations to the carelessness of transcribers, have taken unwarrantable liberties with the text, in order to restore it, as they imagine, to its primitive purity; but when we consider that if the alphabetical order had originally been complete, it must have been a most effectual means of preventing the errors charged upon the copyist, and that the ancient versions coincide with the present Hebrew one, there is strong reason to conclude that such deviations have always existed, the sacred writers not hesitating to sacrifice entire uniformity when they found themselves cramped in the choice of expression by the artificial arrangement. This Psalm is ascribed by the title to David. The deep confession of sin, particularly in verse 11, compared with verse 22, has led to the supposition that it was composed on the occasion of a public calamity, consequent upon one of his great transgressions, "perhaps Absalom's rebellion, which would doubtless awaken in him many painful reflections touching the matter of Uriah the Hittite, as well as of the sins of his youth."—*Phillips*. Some infer from the last verse, in opposition to the evidence of the title, that it was composed during the captivity; and others, from all that precedes being of an individual character, and the alphabetical arrangement terminating with verse 21, that the last was added on the Psalm being introduced into the public service. Of these conjectures the first seems the most probable, if we have any record of the occasion of it.

- 1 UNTO thee, O LORD; do I lift up my soul.
- 2 O my God, I trust in thee :  
Let me not be ashamed,  
Let not mine enemies triumph over me.
- 3 Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed :  
Let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.
- 4 Show me thy ways, O LORD ;  
Teach me thy paths.
- 5 Lead me in thy truth, and teach me :  
For thou *art* the God of my salvation ;  
On thee do I wait all the day.
- 6 Remember, O LORD, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses ;  
For they *have been* ever of old.

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PSALM XXV. 3. *Transgress* ; more correctly, *act treacherously or rebel*.

- 7 Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions :  
According to thy mercy remember thou me,  
For thy goodness' sake, O LORD.
- 8 Good and upright is the Lord :  
Therefore will hé teach sinners in the way.
- 9 The meek will he guide in judgment :  
And the meek will he teach his way.
- 10 All the paths of the LORD *are* mercy and truth  
Unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.
- 11 For thy name's sake, O LORD,  
Pardon mine iniquity ; for it *is* great.
- 12 What man is he that feareth the LORD ?  
Him shall he teach in the way *that* he shall choose.
- 13 His soul shall dwell at ease ;  
And his seed shall inherit the earth.
- 14 The secret of the LORD *is* with them that fear him ;  
And he will show them his covenant.
- 15 Mine eyes *are* ever toward the LORD ;  
For he shall pluck my feet out of the net.
- 16 Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me ;  
For I *am* desolate and afflicted.
- 17 The troubles of my heart are enlarged :  
*Oh* bring thou me out of my distresses.
- 18 Look upon mine affliction and my pain ;  
And forgive all my sins.
- 19 Consider mine enemies ; for they are many ;  
And they hate me with cruel hatred.
- 20 Oh keep my soul, and deliver me :  
Let me not be ashamed ; for I put my trust in thee.
- 21 Let integrity and uprightness preserve me ;  
For I wait on thee.
- 22 Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.

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14. *The secret of the Lord.* "The Hebrew signifies an assembly, a circle of acquaintance, hence familiar confidential intercourse. The secret or confidential communication of Jehovah is with those only who reverence Him."  
—Phillips.



## PSALM XXVI.

*A Psalm of David.*

"From this Psalm it appears that David was reproached by his enemies for keeping company with evil-doers, and for aiding the designs of those who were opposed to the religion and people of Israel. To defend himself from this charge, by asserting his integrity and unchangeable attachment to God, seems to be his main object in the present poem. If the occasion of it be recorded in sacred history, the probability is that it refers to the circumstances which are mentioned in 1 Sam. xxii."—*Phillips*.

- 1 JUDGE me, O LORD ;  
For I have walked in mine integrity :  
I have trusted also in the LORD ;  
Therefore I shall not slide.
- 2 Examine me, O LORD, and prove me ;  
Try my reins and my heart.
- 3 For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes :  
And I have walked in thy truth.
- 4 I have not sat with vain persons,  
Neither will I go in with dissemblers.
- 5 I have hated the congregation of evil doers ;  
And will not sit with the wicked.
- 6 I will wash mine hands in innocency :  
So will I compass thine altar, O LORD :
- 7 That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving,  
And tell of all thy wondrous works.

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PSALM xxvi. 6. "Washing the hands as a token of innocence was common among the Jews on any solemn occasion, as in the case of declaring innocence of the crime of murder.—Deut. xxi. 6, 7. In compliance with this law, Pilate, when he could not prevail on the multitude to release Jesus, took water and washed his hands, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just person.' But washing the hands was always a necessary ceremony to be observed previously to praying; and in allusion to such custom Jehovah says by Isaiah (i. 15, 16) 'When ye make many prayers, I will not hear, your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean.' The Psalmist declares by the figure he has here employed the purity of his feelings and motives when engaged in the exercise of prayer. *So will I compass thine altar.* This expression alludes to the practice of the priests going round the altar at the time of an oblation."—*Phillips*.

- 8 LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house,  
And the place where thine honour dwelleth.
- 9 Gather not my soul with sinners,  
Nor my life with bloody men:
- 10 In whose hands is mischief,  
And their right hand is full of bribes.
- 11 But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity :  
Redeem me, and be merciful unto me.
- 12 My foot standeth in an even place :  
In the congregations will I bless the LORD.

PSALM XXVII.

*A Psalm of David.*

"The title in the Syriac version is, 'A Psalm of David on account of the sickness which fell on him.' But this, however and whenever introduced, is not appropriate; for it is evident from the contents that bodily affliction was not the trouble to which he alludes. The Seventy, followed by the Vulgate and Arabic, say that it was written before David was anointed. If so, the reference must be to his public anointing at Hebron (2 Sam. v.), and

8. *I have loved the habitation of thy house.* Some understand this as equivalent to, *I have loved to inhabit thy house*; but the idea seems rather to be, *the house which thou inhabitest*; thus forming an exact parallel to the next line, *the place where thine honour (or thy glory) dwelleth*. Marginal, *the place of the tabernacle of thine honour*, which appears to refer to the ark, the symbol of the Divine presence in the tabernacle.

9. *Gather not*; or as the marginal rendering, *take not away*. The Hebrew word frequently has the sense of *to destroy*, or *put to death*, sometimes with and sometimes without the addition of *soul* or *life*. "The Psalmist prays that God would not bind him in community of lot with those with whom he had always avoided having any communion in thought and action."—Hengstenberg. In reference to the charge of self-righteousness which has been alleged against this Psalm, see the remarks of Hengstenberg, which he thus concludes:—"It would have been much more becoming to have expressed admiration of the high purity of the moral and religious feelings which pervade this Psalm, at its entire freedom from any false peculiarity, at its living insight into 'Be ye holy, for I am holy;' and at its thorough opposition to everything approaching to Pharisaism, whose fundamental idea is the separation between religion and morality, accompanied with zealous devotion to the former."

not to the private one by Samuel, in his father's house and in the presence of his brethren (1 Sam. xvi.) ; for previously to this latter period there is no evidence from his history that he had experienced calamities of any kind." —*Phillips*. "In the first part, verses 1-6, the Psalmist, rising to heaven on the wings of faith, looks down with contempt on the trouble and danger below, and then descends with the power there acquired to conflict actually with them. In the second part, verses 7-12, the tone of triumph is succeeded by confiding prayer that God would deliver him from those who seek his ruin. Then follows the conclusion, pointing out in a little compass the scope of the whole : if he place not his trust in God he must despair. Hence he exclaims repeatedly to his soul, 'Wait on the Lord.' This forms the essence of the whole Psalm."—*Hengstenberg* ab.

- 1 THE LORD is my light and my salvation ;  
Whom shall I fear ?  
The LORD is the strength of my life ;  
Of whom shall I be afraid ?
- 2 When the wicked, *even* mine enemies and my foes,  
Came upon me to eat up my flesh,  
They stumbled and fell.
- 3 Though an host should encamp against me,  
My heart shall not fear :  
Though war should rise against me,  
In this *will* I *be* confident.
- 4 One *thing* have I desired of the LORD,  
That will I seek after ;  
That I may dwell in the house of the LORD  
All the days of my life,  
To behold the beauty of the LORD,

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PSALM xxvii. 3. *In this will I be confident.* Some refer *this* to the Divine protection spoken of before ; others understand it to mean, *under these circumstances* ; which seems preferable, particularly as the pronoun agrees in gender with *war* just preceding. *In this extremity, I will still confide* (in God's protection, being of course understood.)

4. "The dwelling in the house of the Lord is here, as in other passages, equivalent to entertaining towards Him childlike confidence, enjoying His grace."—*Hengstenberg*. "The beauty or agreeableness of Jehovah denotes whatever of the Divine attributes is pleasant and salutary to His creatures ; His goodness, and grace, and all their signs and effects, expressed in verse 13 by the word *goodness*. In the Divine presence, dwelling in the holy of holies, in the vessels and instruments, and in the offering of sacrifices, these

- And to inquire in his temple.
- 5 For in the time of trouble  
He shall hide me in his pavilion :  
In the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me ;  
He shall set me upon a rock.
- 6 And now shall mine head be lifted up  
Above mine enemies round about me :  
Therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy ;  
I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.
- 7 Hear, O LORD, *when* I cry with my voice :  
Have mercy also upon me, and answer me.
- 8 *When thou saidst*, Seek ye my face ;  
My heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.
- 9 Hide not thy face *far* from me ;  
Put not thy servant away in anger :  
Thou hast been my help ; leave me not,  
Neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.
- 10 When my father and my mother forsake me,  
Then the LORD will take me up.
- 11 Teach me thy way, O LORD,

attributes of the Deity were traced in legible characters, and might be profitably studied by the pious worshipper."—*Phillips*.

8. That considerable obscurity or variation of reading has from an early period existed in this verse, is shown by the ancient versions all differing more or less from each other and from the present Hebrew text; the Septuagint and Vulgate but slightly. "My heart hath said to thee, I have sought thy face; Thy face O Lord I will seek."—*Septuagint*. "My heart hath said to thee, My face hath sought thee," &c.—*Vulgate*. Our translators not only insert a supplementary clause, but transpose the first and second of the original. Several modern versions read, *Concerning thee*, or *on thy behalf*, *my heart said, seek ye my face, &c.*, but perhaps the best interpretation is that given in B.C.B. "My heart said unto thee, Let my face seek thy face," &c.

10. This verse may be rendered, *For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord hath taken me up*. "It is most probable that this expression was proverbial, and was used to denote the entire desertion of a person by his friends, to indicate his solitary condition, and to declare his inability to procure help from any human source."—*Phillips*.

- And lead me in a plain path,  
Because of mine enemies.
- 12 Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies :  
For false witnesses are risen up against me,  
And such as breathe out cruelty.
- 18 *I had fainted*, unless I had believed to see the goodness  
of the LORD in the land of the living.
- 14 Wait on the LORD : be of good courage,  
And he shall strengthen thine heart :  
Wait, I say, on the LORD.

## PSALM XXVIII.

*A Psalm of David.*

The situation described in this Psalm is similar to that in Psalm xxvi., "and the fundamental thought in both is that God cannot bind up together in similarity of outward fate those who inwardly are different; that the lot of the wicked cannot be the same as that of the righteous. It is the oppressed righteous man in general that *there* speaks, *here* it is specially the oppressed righteous king. The contents throughout apply very well to David during Absalom's rebellion, where to all appearance the lots of the righteous and wicked were exchanged; the people were brought into danger on account of their king, and the enemies especially were those who spoke peace to their neighbours, while mischief was in their hearts."—*Hengstenberg*. The sudden transition from supplication to thanksgiving has led to the

13. The words *I had fainted*, as the italics indicate, are not in the Hebrew. The ancient versions, except the Chaldee, omit the next word, *unless*, and read simply *I believe to see*, &c. Many of the Jewish commentators connect this verse with the preceding, *False witnesses had risen up against me*, &c.; *if I had not believed*, &c. But this does not make a good sense, nor is there sufficient authority for rejecting the conjunction; we must therefore regard the passage as an instance of what grammarians term aposiopesis, an abrupt mode of speech, indicative of strong emotion, in which part of the idea is left unexpressed. Of this we have a beautiful example in our Lord's lamentation over Jerusalem (Luke xix. 42.) "If thou hadst known," &c. (happy would it have been for thee). Had the Psalmist completed the sentence he would have added some such expression as, *I had fainted, or yielded to despair—Alas for me!* or as Ostervald supplies, "C'était fait de moi." But "ere he utters the fatal word, a voice within is raised, the strong part of the soul speaking to the weak, exhorting him to continue firmer and firmer in his trust in God."—*Hengstenberg* ab.

supposition that the latter part (v. 6—9) was composed at a subsequent time; but it seems more probable in this and similar instances that the whole was penned at the same period, and either that the Psalmist, while the danger was still impending, expressed his grateful feelings in the full assurance of faith, or that after it was past he recorded for the future benefit of himself and others his petitions during its continuance, together with his thanksgiving for deliverance.

- 1 UNTO thee will I cry, O LORD  
My rock; be not silent to me:  
Lest, *if* thou be silent to me,  
I become like them that go down into the pit.
- 2 Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee,  
When I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle.
- 3 Draw me not away with the wicked,  
And with the workers of iniquity,  
Which speak peace to their neighbours,  
But mischief is in their hearts.
- 4 Give them according to their deeds,  
And according to the wickedness of their endeavours:  
Give them after the work of their hands;  
Render to them their desert.
- 5 Because they regard not the works of the LORD,  
Nor the operation of his hands,  
He shall destroy them,  
And not build them up.
- 6 Blessed *be* the LORD,  
Because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.
- 7 The LORD *is* my strength and my shield;  
My heart trusted in him, and I am helped:  
Therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth;  
And with my song will I praise him.

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PSALM xxviii. 3.—See on Psalms xxvi. 9, cxxv. 5.

7. *Therefore my heart, &c.* The ancient versions differ considerably from the present Hebrew of this clause; thus the Seventy and Vulgate, "My flesh has revived and willingly will I praise him."

8 The LORD is their strength,  
And he is the saving strength of his anointed.

9 Save thy people,  
And bless thine inheritance :  
Feed them also, and lift them up for ever.

### PSALM XXIX.

A Psalm of David.

After an exordium, calling upon the great and noble to ascribe glory and power to God, the Psalmist describes the majesty of the Creator as exhibited in a thunderstorm, in a strain of sublime and magnificent poetry, which, says Rosenmüller, is scarcely equalled by any writer of Greece or Rome; concluding with the assurance that He who "rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm" is also the guardian of His people. Hengstenberg, in reference to the idea that "the Psalm was written to commemorate the abundant rain, probably accompanied by a thunderstorm, which fell in the days of David, after it had been withheld three years," (B.C.B.) says, "the freshness of the painting, the vigorous conceptions, and the rapid transitions of the Psalmist, will give rise to this view only when low ideas are entertained of the power of poetry."

1 GIVE unto the LORD, O ye mighty,  
Give unto the LORD glory and strength.  
2 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name;

8. The reading stated in B.C.B., *his strength, or the strength of his people*, certainly gives a more definite sense, and is adopted by many as genuine; but it is an acknowledged principle of criticism that the more difficult reading is probably the true one; as a transcriber would be more likely to substitute a word of plain and obvious meaning for one somewhat obscure, than *vice versâ*. In the present case there is no necessity for the alteration. The Psalmist, turning suddenly in thought from himself to his people, appears to use the pronoun in an inverted order, followed by the noun to which it relates in the next verse. For similar instances see Psalms xxix. 6, xxxvii. 1, Num. xxiv. 17.

PSALM xxix. 1. *O ye mighty*; Hebrew, *sons of the mighty*, i.e., the great ones of the earth. The word may be rendered *Sons of gods*, by which some understand angels, but the former sense seems more in harmony with the scope of the Psalm, and particularly the conclusion; and it is not likely that the inhabitants of heaven should be called upon to adore the greatness of God as displayed in the phenomena of nature without the call being extended to those of earth.

2. *The beauty of holiness*. The marginal rendering, *his glorious sanctuary*,

Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

- 3 The voice of the LORD is upon the waters :  
The God of glory thundereth :  
The LORD is upon many waters.
- 4 The voice of the LORD is powerful ;  
The voice of the LORD is full of majesty.
- 5 The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars ;  
Yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.
- 6 He maketh them also to skip like a calf ;  
Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.
- 7 The voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire.

is favoured by several of the ancient versions, but it requires the insertion of *his*, which is not in the Hebrew, and the textual rendering, which is less limited in signification, seems preferable. The expression is probably derived from the "holy garments for glory and for beauty" with which the priests were to be clothed when officiating in their sacred services.

3. The Psalmist here commences his description of a tempest, by asserting the presence of God, uttering His voice in thunder, and pouring upon the earth the waters with which the clouds have been over-charged. "Every gentle breath of air is also the voice of the Lord, all nature proclaims His glory, God speaks in everything to men. But because our ears are dull of hearing, that especially is called His voice, by which He speaks in louder tones, and proclaims to us, in spite of all unwillingness on our part to hear, His omnipotence and His majesty."—*Hengstenberg*.

6. *He maketh them also to skip like a calf*. Some refer *them* to the cedars mentioned before, but it is more in accordance with the poetic structure to understand the whole of this verse of the mountains, the usual order of the nouns and pronouns being inverted to render the lines of the couplet of equal length. For similar instances see note on verse 8 of the preceding Psalm. *Sirion*, the Sidonian name for the south-eastern ridge of Antilibanus, usually called in scripture, Hermon.—*Dent. iii. 9*. Phillips quotes the verse of Horace (book ii. ode 10), which is very apposite to the subject of these two verses, but does not equal in force and sublimity the diction of the Hebrew bard :—

"Sæpius ventis agitur ingens  
Pinus ; et celsæ graviore casu,  
Decidunt turres, feriuntque summos  
Fulmina montes."

7. The brevity of this verse depicts the rapid motion of the cleft or forked lightning, which is usually accompanied by thunder.



- 8 The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness ;  
The LORD shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.
- 9 The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve,  
And discovereth the forests :  
And in his temple  
Doth every one speak of *his* glory.
- 10 The LORD sitteth upon the flood ;  
Yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever.
- 11 The LORD will give strength unto his people ;  
The LORD will bless his people with peace.

9. *Maketh the hinds to calve* ; that is, prematurely, from the effect of terror. The rendering proposed by Lowth, "*maketh the oaks to tremble*, understanding *ayyaloth* as denoting here not *hinds*, but *oaks*, as it signifies in Syriac," (B.C.B.) would seem more in accordance with the rest of the imagery, but the common translation is supported by the use of the Hebrew word in all other instances, as well as by the ancient versions.

*And discovereth the forests*; layeth bare by stripping their leaves,

*And in his temple doth every one speak of his glory*. His temple, "the heavens above, the clouds and storms, where He resideth in pure majesty and reigneth as King for ever."—*Geddes*. Some understand the universe at large, which seems apposite to the context. *Every one*, literally *all of it*, all which it (the temple) contains. Thus the sense of the passage may be that expressed in the lines of Pope :—

"To Thee whose temple is all space,  
Whose altar, earth, sea, skies,  
One chorus let all being raise,  
All nature's incense rise."

10. *The Lord sitteth (or sat) upon the flood*. These words are supposed by many to refer to the deluge, and the verse is thus paraphrased by the Chaldee Targum. "The Lord in the generation of the flood, sat upon the judgment seat to punish them; and the Lord sat upon the mercy-seat and delivered Noah, and He reigneth over His children for ever." But it seems more in accordance with the general scope of the Psalm to consider the passage as referring to the waters of the earth generally, and expressing the control of the Deity over the elements.

PSALM XXX.

A Psalm and Song at the dedication of the house of David.

"A Psalm or song of David at the dedication of the house, by which is supposed to be meant the place he built on the threshing-floor of Araunah, after the grievous plague which had nearly desolated the kingdom, 2 Sam. xxiv. 25, 26, and 1 Ch. xxi. 6."—*B.C.B.* The words of *David* belong, as above stated, to the Psalm as its author, not to the house; but the designation should stand *A Psalm-song*, without inserting *or* or *and*. The contents of the Psalm seem not inappropriate to the circumstances alluded to; but the words, *dedication of the house*, are hardly applicable to the proceedings on that occasion, and the strictly personal character of the Psalm, together with the absence of any allusion to a place devoted to Divine worship, seems more in accordance with the view taken by Phillips, that if the title is to be received as explanatory of the Psalm, it refers to the dedication of David's own house, probably the palace built for him at the expense of the king of Tyre, agreeably to a custom of the Jews that the day of commencing a residence in a new house should be one of rejoicing and festivity.—*Deut.* xx. 5. "If so, as the poem is evidently a thanksgiving for recovery from sickness, it would seem that the author's removal to the new house occurred immediately after this happy event, and that it was consequently made the subject of the ode which it was usual to sing on such occasions."

- 1 I WILL extol thee, O LORD ;  
For thou hast lifted me up,  
And hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.
- 2 O LORD my God, I cried unto thee,  
And thou hast healed me.
- 3 O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave :  
Thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the  
pit.
- 4 Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his,  
And give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.
- 5 For his anger *endureth but a moment* ;  
In his favour *is life* :  
Weeping may endure for a night,  
But joy *cometh* in the morning.

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PSALM xxx. 5. The old translators render the first clause, *For anger or rebuke is in his wrath, but life in his favour* ; which yields a good sense, but does not appear to be so well supported by the general use of the Hebrew word as the common version.

- 6 And in my prosperity I said,  
I shall never be moved.
- 7 LORD, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong :  
Thou didst hide thy face, *and* I was troubled.
- 8 I cried to thee, O LORD ;  
And unto the LORD I made supplication.
- 9 What profit *is there* in my blood,  
When I go down to the pit ?  
Shall the dust praise thee ?  
Shall it declare thy truth ?
- 10 Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me :  
LORD, be thou my helper.
- 11 Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing :  
Thou hast put off my sackcloth,  
And girded me with gladness ;
- 12 To the end that *my* glory may sing praise to thee,  
And not be silent.  
O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

## PSALM XXXI.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

"Bishop Patrick and others suppose that David composed this Psalm to encourage himself and friends during his extreme danger of being seized by

7. *My mountain.* "The mountain is clearly in general a striking emblem of dominion, but there was in the case before us a particular reason why the Psalmist selected this figure. A mountain was the centre of David's kingdom, compare 2 Sam. v. 9, 'And David dwelt in the fort and called it the city of David.' On the top of the high and steep eminence the royal city was situated, which was termed the upper king's house. Its situation must have rendered it a place of great security."—*Hengstenberg*. The expression may, however, denote prosperity in a more general sense. Most of the ancient versions render, *Thou hast made strong my beauty or glory*, having apparently read the Hebrew with a variation of one letter from the present text, but conveying the same general idea of prosperity.

12. *To the end that my glory, &c.*, rather *therefore shall my glory ; my soul*, as explained in note on Psalm xvi. 7—9.

Saul, when he fled from Keilah, 1 Sam. xxiii. 22—28.”—*B.C.B.* “What connects the poem with this event rather than with any other of the Psalmist’s flights from Saul is, that the same expression as in the twenty-second verse, *in my haste*, or *in my rapid flight*, is also used in 1 Sam. xxiii. 26, where it is said that ‘David made haste to get away for fear of Saul.’ The Seventy headed this Psalm, *Ecstasy* (extreme fear or perturbation), the same word by which they have translated the Hebrew in verse 22, and which indicates, in a slight degree, in what manner they would have it to be understood.”—*Phillips*. Respecting the vicissitudes of feeling here indicated, see remarks on Psalm xxviii.

- 1 IN thee, O LORD, do I put my trust ;  
Let me never be ashamed :  
Deliver me in thy righteousness.
- 2 Bow down thine ear to me ;  
Deliver me speedily :  
Be thou my strong rock,  
For an house of defence to save me.
- 3 For thou *art* my rock and my fortress ;  
Therefore for thy name’s sake lead me, and guide me.
- 4 Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me :  
For thou *art* my strength.
- 5 Into thine hand I commit my spirit :

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PSALM xxxi. 1. *Deliver me in thy righteousness.* “The righteousness of God demands that He should not give over to destruction *those who trust in Him* ; it being of course understood that it is a *real heart-felt trust*, such as springs from a pure conscience.”—*Hengstenberg*.

3. *For thy name’s sake.* “This expression is equivalent to, for the sake of thy historically manifested glory, *i.e.*, *thy righteousness*, of verse 1. What the Lord *is* and *has done* gives the Psalmist a warrant for something which He is to do for him.”—*Hengstenberg*.

5. *Into thine hand I commit my spirit.* “These words, as they stand in the Vulgate, were in the highest credit among our ancestors, by whom they were used in all dangers and difficulties, and in the article of death ; they were used by the sick when about to expire, if sensible, and if not the priest said them on their behalf. In forms of prayer for sick and dying persons, the words were frequently inserted in Latin, though the rest of the prayer was English ; for it was supposed there was something sovereign in the language itself. But let not the abuse of such words hinder their usefulness. These words are particularly sanctified by the use made of them by our blessed Lord, just before He expired on the cross. The rest of the verse was not suitable to the Saviour of the world, but it is to us who

- Thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.
- 6 I have hated them that regard lying vanities :  
But I trust in the LORD.
- 7 I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy :  
For thou hast considered my trouble ;  
Thou hast known my soul in adversities ;
- 8 And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy :  
Thou hast set my feet in a large room.
- 9 Have mercy upon me, O LORD, for I am in trouble :  
Mine eye is consumed with grief,  
Yea, my soul and my belly.
- 10 For my life is spent with grief,  
And my years with sighing ;  
My strength faileth because of mine iniquity,  
And my bones are consumed
- 11 I was a reproach among all mine enemies,  
But especially among my neighbours,  
And a fear to mine acquaintance :  
They that did see me without fled from me.
- 12 I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind :  
I am like a broken vessel.

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have been redeemed by that sacrificial death. Stephen uses nearly the same words, and they were the last he uttered."—*A. Clarke* ab. "Hush, on the way to the stake, frequently repeated, 'Into thine hand I commend my spirit, Thou hast redeemed me, my Lord Jesus, God of truth.'"—*Hengstenberg*.

6. *Lying vanities* ; false gods, frequently designated by this term ; see Deut. xxxii. 21, Jer. x. 8, 15, Jonah ii. 8. But though "it refers here immediately to idols, the remark of Calvin is in reality correct : 'All those vain hopes which we invent for ourselves, and which withdraw our trust from God, David calls vanities, and even vanities of nothingness, or lies, because they delude and deceive us.'"—*Hengstenberg*.

10. *Because of mine iniquity*. The Psalmist might be innocent in reference to his enemies, and he was a righteous man in regard to the general tenor of his life ; but this was quite compatible with the existence of manifold sins of infirmity, which rendered it necessary that he should be purified by the cross. These sins call for *punishment*, not *destruction*, and it is that this, which he finds to be near, may be averted, that he appeals to the righteousness of God."—*Hengstenberg*.

- 13 For I have heard the slander of many :  
 Fear *was* on every side :  
 While they took counsel together against me,  
 They devised to take away my life.
- 14 But I trusted in thee, O LORD :  
 I said, Thou *art* my God.
- 15 My times *are* in thy hand :  
 Deliver me from the hand of mine enemies,  
 And from them that persecute me.
- 16 Make thy face to shine upon thy servant :  
 Save me for thy mercies' sake.
- 17 Let me not be ashamed, O LORD ;  
 For I have called upon thee :  
 Let the wicked be ashamed,  
 And let them be silent in the grave.
- 18 Let the lying lips be put to silence ;  
 Which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously  
 against the righteous.
- 19 Oh how great *is* thy goodness,  
 Which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee ;  
 Which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee  
 Before the sons of men !
- 20 Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence  
 From the pride of man :  
 Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion  
 From the strife of tongues.
- 21 Blessed *be* the LORD : for he hath shewed me

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18. "That Jeremiah found this Psalm suitable to his circumstances, and drew consolation from it, is evident from chapter xx. 10, besides other passages, where we find the very peculiar language of the first part of this verse repeated word for word."—*Hengstenberg*.

20. *Pride* ; more correctly, *plots* or *conspiracies*.

21. The mode of expression seems to denote protection *in* a strong city, rather than escape *from* it, and if understood literally would comport better with the period when David took refuge at the court of Achish, who gave him Ziklag, than with that of his deliverance from the traitorous design of the

His marvellous kindness in a strong city.

22 For I said in my haste,  
I am cut off from before ~~thine eyes~~ :  
Nevertheless thou heardest the voice of ~~my~~ supplications  
When I cried unto thee.

28 Oh love the LORD, all ye his saints :  
*For* the LORD preserveth the faithful,  
And plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.

24 Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart,  
All ye that hope in the LORD.

### PSALM XXXII.

*A Psalm of David, Maschil [or, giving instruction].*

Respecting the appropriateness of this Psalm to the occasion to which it is usually assigned, viz., when Nathan had assured David that his sin was pardoned (2 Sam. xii. 13), and its coincidence with the historic narrative, see Hengstenberg. The word *Maschil*, in the title of this and twelve others, signifies, *giving instruction, didactic*, and is derived from the same root as the first word of verse 8, *I will instruct thee*.—See note on verse 6. "David celebrates in this Psalm the happiness of a sinner who has obtained mercy from God, the preciousness of the forgiveness of sins, and the blessedness of purity and uprightness before God."—*Hengstenberg*. This Psalm is cited by the Apostle (Rom. iv. 6–8) in illustration of the doctrine of justification by faith; and this probably led to the title prefixed to the Syriac version, which not inaptly indicates the evangelical character and application of the Psalm. "A Psalm of David concerning the sin of Adam, who dared and transgressed, and a prophecy concerning Christ, because through Him we are to be delivered from Hell." To the same purpose also the Arabic, "Spoken prophetically of the redemption." This Psalm is divided by the *Selah* into four progressive portions, each containing two stanzas or couplets, besides the introduction and conclusion. The first two opening stanzas announcing the

inhabitants of Keilah, as suggested in B.C.B.; but probably the meaning is that God had protected him as safely as if he had been in a defenced city. "Johann Arndt is short and good: 'The strong city is God Himself, and His powerful and gracious protection, in which we are even more secure than in a strong city.' The Psalmist had prayed (verse 2) that God would be to him a strong rock and house of defence, and he now sees this prayer fulfilled."—*Hengstenberg*.

22. *In my haste*.—See introductory note. The Hebrew word signifies to flee in haste through terror, and is very appropriate to the circumstances there referred to.—See on Psalm cxvi. 11.

happiness of him whose sins are forgiven, with two others describing the Psalmist's condition before attaining to this state. The second two couplets comprised in verse 5, his confession and its happy effects. The third (verses 6-7), intimation of his purpose to instruct others from his own experience. The fourth (verses 8-11), further development of this purpose with a change of address: and two concluding stanzas similar to the commencement, but declaring the happiness of the righteous in a more lively and joyful strain.

- 1 BLESSED *is he whose transgression is forgiven,*  
*Whose sin is covered.*
- 2 Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD  
Imputeth not iniquity,  
And in whose spirit *there is no guile.*
- 8 When I kept silence my bones waxed old  
Through my roaring all the day long.
- 4 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me:  
My moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.

PSALM xxxii. 1-2. *Transgression, sin, iniquity.* The precise meanings of the Hebrew terms represented by these words are; the first, primarily—*desertion, revolt*; hence, *passing a boundary, transgression*; *crime generally.* The second, primarily—*missing a mark, not doing what was commanded*; hence, *sinfulness or sin in the abstract, sin in the nature producing transgression.* The third, primarily—*what is turned out of course*; hence, *moral perversion, iniquity, what is contrary to equity and justice.* The remedies are—*Forgiving, covering, not imputing.* The Hebrew of the first is, primarily—to *bear, carry away*; hence, *to bear the guilt of, to carry away as a vicarious sacrifice, to forgive.* The second, *to cover, put out of sight as something abominable*, and this is also the sense of the word usually translated *atone.* The third, *not to reckon to the account of, to pardon freely.* To enjoy these blessings there must be absence of guile, sincerity of heart.

3. The first and last parts of this verse appear to contradict each other. One mode of reconciling them is suggested in B.C.B.: "My grief, when deprived of the power of expression, brought on my animal frame the effects of premature old age." But the preferable one seems to be, *to understand by the keeping silence—withholding confession*; and by the *roaring*, the mere complaint of pain and distress under the Divine chastisement. "Before I confessed my sin, I was in constant agony of mind, but now, by doing so, I have obtained ease."

4. *My moisture; vital juice, vigour*; a metaphor derived from a plant whose sap is dried up by the heat and drought of the summer sun.



- 5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee,  
And mine iniquity have I not hid.  
I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord;  
And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.
- 6 For this shall every one that is godly  
Pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found:  
Surely in the floods of great waters  
They shall not come nigh unto him.
- 7 Thou art my hiding-place;  
Thou shalt preserve me from trouble;  
Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.  
Selah.
- 8 I will instruct thee and teach thee  
In the way which thou shalt go:  
I will guide thee with mine eye.

6. For this, i.e., for this reason, the willingness of God to forgive on penitent confession. "Whoever, at the time of *finding* (during the season of grace), flies to God for forgiveness, shall, at the time of *judgment*, be exempted from it. Perhaps the Psalmist alludes to the deluge at which, though it overspread the world, the pious Noah was delivered."—Hengstenberg. The *didactic* character of the Psalm here begins to develope itself; the writer referring to his own experience as the basis of the encouragement and counsel he wishes to impart to others, and which are more fully brought into view in verses 8 and 9.

8. This verse is generally explained as an address from God or an oracular voice to the Psalmist, who in verse 9 exhorts those who are supposed also to hear it, or to whom he repeats it, to yield a willing obedience to the Divine counsels. Hengstenberg, however, objects to this exposition, as not only without foundation, but entirely destroying the connection and train of thought; and regards David as still the speaker pursuing his didactic purpose, and to give more impressiveness to the exhortation, directing his address at first individually to *every one that is godly*. (verse 6.) *I will guide thee with mine eye*; literally, *I will counsel thee, mine eye shall be upon thee*; or, as the ellipsis may be supplied, *I will counsel (thee with) mine eye upon thee*, that is, with tender regard. But the ancient versions give a different sense to the verb: "I will set mine eye upon thee." This is more clear and simple, and differs from the present Hebrew very slightly.

- 9 Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule,  
Which have no understanding :  
Whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle,  
Lest they come near unto thee.
- 10 Many sorrows *shall be* to the wicked :  
But he that trusteth in the LORD,  
Mercy shall compass him about.
- 11 Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous :  
And shout for joy, all *ye that are* upright in heart.

PSALM XXXIII.

"In the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate, this is termed a Psalm of David."—*B.C.B.* The absence of any Hebrew title, and the similarity of the first verse to the last of the preceding, have led some to conclude that the two Psalms were originally one, as they are written in a few MSS. Others would make the last verse of Psalm xxxii. the commencement of this. The

9. This verse presents considerable critical difficulty from its elliptical construction, and the use of several words of infrequent occurrence. Our translators, however, appear to give the general sense correctly, except in the last clause, *lest they come near unto thee*; which should rather be, *because, or otherwise they will not come near unto thee*. The object of bit and bridle is not to prevent the horse or mule from coming near to man to injure him, which indeed is not their nature, but to *make them* come near, that is to render them tractable and subservient to him. Hengstenberg quotes the following comment of Arndt on this verse, which is rather quaintly expressed but very apposite: "You have received from God a reasonable soul, yea you hear the friendly pleasing voice of your Father and His dear Son. But if you will be as stupid as the horse or the mule, God in that case will act well in patting upon your neck a bridle, and a bit for the purpose of compelling and restraining you like a senseless brute. God, for example, put a bridle and bit into Nebuchadnezzar's mouth, and tamed the proud beast. God also put a bridle and bit into Manasseh's mouth; when he lay bound in iron chains he would gladly have bowed the knee before God if his iron fetters would have permitted him. God brought down the proud Pharaoh by means of contemptible creatures, frogs, lice, and grasshoppers."

10, 11. In conclusion, "David, in contrast to the miserable condition of the wicked, praises the happy state of the righteous, who put their confidence in God, in language based on the deliverance, which when he had fallen very deeply, had been vouchsafed to him by God, out of apparently irremediable destruction."—*Hengstenberg*.

completeness and distinctive character of each Psalm are, however, decidedly opposed to the former supposition; and the proposed transposition of the verse in question would derange the orderly construction of both, as the main body of each Psalm is preceded by an introduction and followed by a conclusion, each consisting in Psalm xxxii. of two, and in Psalm xxxiii. of three verses. It is therefore more probable that the resemblance between the concluding verse of the one Psalm and the opening one of the other, induced the compiler to place them together; or rather that the sacred penman, pursuing the train of thought into which he had been led in closing the former, adopted nearly the same words as the opening of a *new song* of praise, designed to take a wider range in celebrating the power and goodness of God as displayed in creation and providence, and more especially in the guardianship of His people.

- 1 REJOICE in the LORD, O ye righteous :  
For praise is comely for the upright.
- 2 Praise the LORD with harp :  
Sing unto him with the psaltery *and* an instrument of ten strings.
- 3 Sing unto him a new song :  
Play skilfully with a loud noise.
- 4 For the word of the LORD is right ;  
And all his works *are done* in truth.
- 5 He loveth righteousness and judgment.  
The earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.
- 6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made ;  
And all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.
- 7 He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap :

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PSALM xxxiii. 2. *With the psaltery ; rather, with the ten-stringed naba.—*  
B.C.B.

3. *Play skilfully with a loud noise ; rather, with a joyful sound, or, in full chorus.*

4. *And all his works are done in truth ; literally, all his work, or, all that he doeth is in faithfulness.* Luther's version, though not literal, well expresses the sense of the verse : "For the word of the Lord is true, and what He has said that He holds for certain."

6-9. The Psalmist in these verses evidently alludes to the work of creation described in the first chapter of Genesis, as effected by the word or command of God, and summed up in chap. ii. 1, where the sun, moon, and stars are termed the host of heaven.

7. "He separated the waters from the earth, and while the latter formed continents, islands, mountains, hills and valleys, the former were collected

- He layeth up the depth in storehouses.  
 8 Let all the earth fear the LORD :  
 Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.  
 9 For he spake, and it was *done* ;  
 He commanded, and it stood fast.  
 10 The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought :  
 He maketh the devices of the people of none effect.  
 11 The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever,  
 The thoughts of his heart to all generations.  
 12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD ;  
 And the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.  
 13 The LORD looketh from heaven ;  
 He beholdeth all the sons of men.

into one place and called seas ; and, by his all-controlling power and providence, the waters have retained their place ; and he has so adapted the solar and lunar influence exerted on the waters, that the tides are only raised to certain heights.”—*B.C.B.* *As an heap* ; the old versions, by a variation of one letter and supplying a preposition, read *as in a bottle* ; which some modern translators adopt as more suitable to the subject ; but if, as appears to be the case, the Psalmist intended to compare the great reservoir of waters to a store of corn or other provisions or treasures laid up for distribution when required, no expression could be more appropriate than the word *heap* ; which, being also the term employed (Ex. xv. 8 ; Josh. iii. 13, 16) in reference to the miraculous division of the Red Sea and the River Jordan for the passage of the Israelites, he might, by applying it to the primary and continued separation of the waters of the earth, design further to intimate that the ordinary and extraordinary providences of God alike bespeak the hand of omnipotence.

9. Literally, *He spake, and it was : He commanded, and it stood*,—closely resembles the laconic sublimity of Gen. i. 3 : *And God said, Be light, and light was*. The Seventy well express the import of the verse by a paraphrase rather than translation : “ For he spake, and they were made ; he commanded, and they were created.”

10. “ The verbs may be more properly rendered in the past tense, referring to the many signal instances of God’s defeating the designs of the heathen, as recorded in the Old Testament. The Seventy add to the end, ‘ and frustrates the counsels of princes.’ This was probably at first a marginal note, and afterwards inserted as a part of the text.”—*Phillips*.

- 14 From the place of his habitation  
He looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.
- 15 He fashioneth their hearts alike ;  
He considereth all their works.
- 16 There is no king saved by the multitude of an host :  
A mighty man is not delivered by much strength.
- 17 An horse *is* a vain thing for safety :  
Neither shall he deliver *any* by his great strength.
- 18 Behold the eye of the LORD *is* upon them that fear him,  
Upon them that hope in his mercy ;
- 19 To deliver their soul from death,  
And to keep them alive in famine.
- 20 Our soul waiteth for the LORD :  
He *is* our help and our shield.
- 21 For our heart shall rejoice in him,  
Because we have trusted in his holy name.
- 22 Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us,  
According as we hope in thee.

## PSALM XXXIV.

*A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech,  
[or, Achish], who drove him away, and he departed.*

"Achish, king of Gath, is probably here called Abimelech, because that was a common name of the Philistine kings. This is the second of the acrostic or alphabetical Psalms, each verse beginning consecutively with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The verse, however, which begins with *van*, and which should come in between the fifth and sixth, is totally wanting; but as the twenty-second, which now begins with *pay*, *redeh*, *redeemeth*, is entirely out of the series, it is not improbable that it was originally written *oophodeh*, and *redeemeth*, and occupied that situation, in which connection it reads admirably."—*B.C.B.* (But as to this suggested transposition, see *infra*.) There is nothing in this Psalm which appears to relate, or to be particularly appropriate to the occasion referred to in the title; but this circumstance is rather in favour of, than against the authenticity of the latter, as the less likely to have been the offspring of fancy or conjecture. The objections urged against it are fully discussed by Hengstenberg, who judiciously remarks: "It is not, however, to be imagined that David composed the Psalm when immediately threatened by danger. In opposition to any such idea we have the quiet tone by which it is pervaded, whereas all the Psalms which were immediately called forth by a particular occasion are characterized by much more emotion. Besides this we have the

unquestionably predominant effort to draw consolation and instruction for the Church from his own personal experience; and finally, the alphabetical arrangement, which occurs only in those of this character. The fact is, that David, when at some subsequent period his mind became filled with lively emotions from the recollection of this wonderful escape, made it the groundwork of a treasure of edification for the godly in all ages."—*ab.* The transposition proposed to complete the alphabetical arrangement of the verses is an instance of the unwarrantable liberties, as I deem them, referred to at Psalm xxv. It is a mere conjecture, unsupported by any Hebrew MSS. or ancient versions; and the *prima facie* improbability that the text has suffered from the hands of transcribers such a derangement as it assumes to have been the case, is strengthened by the coincidence between this Psalm and the twenty-fifth, each having a concluding verse *after* the termination of the alphabetical series, and neither of them having a *Vau* stanza; the omission of which is readily accounted for by the extreme paucity of words beginning with that letter, the lexicons not containing more than six, and none in common use besides the copulative conjunction. This, in *all the other* alphabetical Psalms, serves the purpose, but would be unsuitable in these two, where each verse (the *first line* of which only exhibits the alphabetical order) forms a complete and independent sense.

- 1 I WILL bless the LORD at all times :  
His praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth.
- 2 My soul shall make her boast in the LORD :  
The humble shall hear *thereof*, and be glad.
- 3 Oh magnify the LORD with me,  
And let us exalt his name together.
- 4 I sought the LORD, and he heard me,  
And delivered me from all my fears.
- 5 They looked upon him, and were lightened :  
And their faces were not ashamed.

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PSALM xxxiv. 5. *They looked unto him and were lightened*; margin, or *flowed unto him*. The latter sense, which the Hebrew sometimes has, is inappropriate here. The word *lightened* is ambiguous, and may mean either *enlightened* or *relieved*. The former is the primary meaning of the Hebrew word, but the two ideas combined very well express the sense in this instance, the brightening of the countenance as the effect of relief from trouble. It is not very obvious *who* are denoted in this verse, the humble of verse 2, or those who were in the condition of David, as described in verse 4. "The Psalmist considers himself throughout as the representative of the meek, the transition, therefore, is easy from the singular of the preceding verse to the plural here."—*Hengstenberg*. The ancient versions, however, read *the verse* in the second person, "Look unto him and be lightened," &c.

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- 6 This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him,  
And saved him out of all his troubles.
- 7 The angel of the LORD encampeth  
Round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.
- 8 Oh taste and see that the LORD is good :  
Blessed is the man that trusteth in him.
- 9 Oh fear the LORD, ye his saints :  
For there is no want to them that fear him.
- 10 The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger :  
But they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing.
- 11 Come, ye children, hearken unto me :  
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
- 12 What man is he that desireth life,  
And loveth many days, that he may see good ?
- 13 Keep thy tongue from evil,  
And thy lips from speaking guile.
- 14 Depart from evil, and do good ;  
Seek peace, and pursue it.
- 15 The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous,  
And his ears are open unto their cry.
- 16 The face of the LORD is against them that do evil,  
To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.
- 17 The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth,  
And delivereth them out of all their troubles.
- 

6. *This poor man*, or, *afflicted one*, pointing to himself, and perhaps employing the third person because the initial letter of the pronoun suits the alphabetical arrangement.

10. *The young lions*. The ancient versions, by a change of one letter, read *the rich* or *mighty*, and many understand the present Hebrew, *young lions*, in a similar sense ; but there seems no sufficient ground for rejecting either this reading itself or its literal sense. Though creatures pre-eminently endowed by nature with the means for procuring their food may sometimes be unable to obtain it, yet they who trust in the Lord shall not want anything which is really good for them.

11. *Ye children* ; literally *sons*, a word employed in didactic addresses, as frequently in the Proverbs, in the sense of disciples, or those who are disposed to receive counsel or instruction.

- 18 The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart ;  
And saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.  
19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous :  
But the LORD delivereth him out of them all.  
20 He keepeth all his bones :  
Not one of them is broken.  
21 Evil shall slay the wicked :  
And they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.  
22 The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants :  
And none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.

PSALM XXXV.

*A Psalm of David.*

" This Psalm, as is evident from its language, was composed by David when fiercely persecuted by Saul, Doeg, and the rest of the courtiers."—*B.C.B.* The striking coincidence of verse 1 with the words addressed by David to Saul at the cave of En-gedi (1 Sam. xxiv. 12—15), seems to point more particularly to the events of that period as its probable origin. " The Psalm falls into three strophes, in each of which the three elements of complaint, prayer, and promise of thanksgiving are contained, and which are especially remarkable on this account, that each of these runs out into the vow of thanksgiving, verses 1—10, 11—18, 19—28."—*Hengstenberg*.

1 PLEAD *my cause*, O LORD, with them that strive with me :

Fight against them that fight against me.

20. *He keepeth all his bones.* " A proverbial expression, teaching us concerning the great care and watchfulness which God exercises over His creatures, in accordance with what our Saviour Himself intimates, that the hairs of our head are all numbered. On the strength of this verse the silly and conceited Rabbis affirmed that there was a small bone of the spine which will never rot or be frittered away by time, even if it lay in the ground for many thousands of years, and that from it God will begin to create man again."—*Phillips*. The words of this verse were literally exemplified in the circumstances attending our Lord's crucifixion.

PSALM xxxv. 1. The word *contend* would more correctly express the sense, and preserve the paranomasia, which the original exhibits in the first as well as the second line of this verse.

Contend, O LORD, with them that contend with me.

Fight against them that fight against me.



- 2 Take hold of shield and buckler,  
And stand up for mine help.
- 3 Draw out also the spear,  
And stop *the way* against them that persecute me:  
Say unto my soul, I *am* thy salvation.
- 4 Let them be confounded and put to shame  
That seek after my soul :  
Let them be turned back and brought to confusion  
That devise my hurt.
- 5 Let them be as chaff before the wind :  
And let the angel of the Lord chase *them*.
- 6 Let their way be dark and slippery :  
And let the angel of the Lord persecute them.
- 7 For without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit,

2. *Take hold of shield and buckler.* Two kinds of shield are here referred to, the *magin*, or smaller shield held by the warrior before his face, and the *tsenna*, calculated to protect the whole body : see 1 Kings x. 16, 17, where the latter is rendered *target*.

3. *Stop the way*, or *close up against*, &c. Some take the word as a noun, denoting an instrument of war, and render, *draw out the spear and lance, or battle-axe, to meet my persecutors, or pursuers* ; which has the recommendation of forming a more exact parallel with the preceding verse ; but the sole ground for assigning this meaning to the word being its resemblance to a foreign one of like import, does not seem sufficient to counterbalance the authority derived from its constant Hebrew usage, and the ancient versions, all of which render it as a verb.

5, 6. *The angel of the Lord.* The Hebrew word *Malach* signifies simply *messenger*, and is employed in reference either to a human being or a celestial spirit. Here it appears to be used in the latter sense, but poetically and metaphorically to denote the agents of God's vengeance, as it is in verse 7 of the preceding Psalm to indicate His preserving care.

*Persecute, or pursue them*, which is the simple meaning of the Hebrew, as it is also of our English word *persecute*, though the latter is always used in a hostile or injurious sense. In the Hebrew, however, there is generally no such distinction, the same word being used in both senses.

7. The phraseology of this verse is derived from two distinct modes of ensnaring wild animals, the one by spreading a net, the other by means of a pitfall concealed from view by light substances laid over its mouth ; but as the text now stands both are blended together in the first line, and the

*Which without cause they have digged for my soul.*

- 8 Let destruction come upon him at unawares ;  
And let his net that he hath hid catch himself :  
Into that very destruction let him fall.
- 9 And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD :  
It shall rejoice in his salvation.
- 10 All my bones shall say,  
LORD, who is like unto thee,  
Which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for  
him,  
Yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him ?
- 11 False witnesses did rise up ;  
They laid to my charge *things* that I knew not.
- 12 They rewarded me evil for good  
To the spoiling of my soul.
- 13 But as for me, when they were sick,

second is left defective. By the mere transposition of two words which is favoured by the authority of the Syriac version, both distichs become clear and complete :—

“ For without cause they have hid for me their net,

A pit without cause have they digged for my soul : ”

or *life*, for in this sense the word is to be understood in these verses.

8. *Into that very destruction let him fall.* The old versions read, *into that very pit*, which preserves a better parallelism with the previous line, and with verse 7. The two Hebrew words are similar to each other.

10. *All my bones.* This expression is used here, as in Psalm vi. 2, for the whole bodily frame. *Shall say, &c.*, “ My life being preserved, all the members of my body shall magnify Thy saving mercy.”—*A. Clarke.*

13. *My prayer returned into mine own bosom.* Several different explanations are offered of this expression ; as, I prayed for nothing in regard to them, which I would not have asked for myself, or, I continued praying for them, and though in vain as respected them, yet I had my reward in the sight of God. Thus understood, the phrase is equivalent to that in Matt. x. 13, Luke x. 6. “ Your peace shall turn to you again.” This exposition is preferable to the former, which is rather a straining of the text ; but one which appears still more apposite is derived from the postures assumed by the Jews when engaged in prayer, with whom, as with other Orientals, that of bowing the head to the bosom was regarded as the

- My clothing *was* sackcloth :  
 I humbled my soul with fasting ;  
 And my prayer returned into mine own bosom.
- 14 I behaved myself as though *he had been* my friend or brother :  
 I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth *for his* mother.
- 15 But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together :  
*Yea*, the abjects gathered themselves together against me,  
 and I knew *it* not ;  
 They did tear *me*, and ceased not :
- 16 With hypocritical mockers in feasts,  
 They gnashed upon me with their teeth.
- 17 Lord, how long wilt thou look on ?  
 Rescue my soul from their destructions,  
 My darling from the lions.
- 18 I will give thee thanks in the great congregation :  
 I will praise thee among much people.

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attitude most indicative of great mental distress. This view is quite in unison with the rest of the verse, in which the Psalmist describes his feelings of kindness and sympathy towards those who were now requiting him with the basest ingratitude.

15. *The abjects.* The original is a participle of the verb *to smite*, by some interpreted in a passive sense, *the smitten*, and thence, *abject, vile, whom I knew not*, such as I held beneath my notice, as those in Job xxx. 1. It seems, however, more correct to construe the word actively, *the smiters*; perhaps *with the tongue* should be understood, (as in Jer. xviii. 18, where this phrase is expressed in full); *the calumniators gathered themselves together and I knew it not, i.e., assailed me with secret revilings.*

16. With *hypocritical*, rather, *profane mockers at feasts*; *i.e., profane persons who make it their employment to play the scoffer or buffoon at a feast for the amusement or gratification of the malice of their patrons.* There is considerable verbal variation between the present text and the old versions. Whether they read differently or preferred a paraphrase to a literal translation is not clear. Thus the Seventy, "They tempted me, they greatly mocked me." The Syriac, "In their pride and in their mockery they gnashed upon me with their teeth." The Chaldee, "With words of flatteries, scoffing and deriding."

19 Let not, them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me :

*Neither* let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause.

20 For they speak not peace :

But they devise deceitful matters against *them that are* quiet in the land.

21 Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me,

*And* said, Aha ! Aha ! our eye hath seen *it*.

22 *This* thou hast seen, O LORD : keep not silence :

O LORD, be not far from me.

23 Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment,

*Even* unto my cause, my God and my Lord.

24 Judge me, O LORD my God, according to thy righteousness ;

And let them not rejoice over me.

25 Let them not say in their hearts,

Ah ! so would we have it :

Let them not say, We have swallowed him up.

26 Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together

That rejoice at mine hurt :

Let them be clothed with shame and dishonour

That magnify *themselves* against me.

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21. *Aha ! aha ! our eye hath seen it, i.e., what we desired.* *Aha* is exactly the Hebrew word. It is a sign, says Yarchi, of the joy of him who boasteth of the desire of his heart, when that desire has been accomplished. A striking illustration of this passage from the customs of the Hindoos is given by Roberts: "See that rude fellow who has triumphed over another, he distends his mouth to the utmost, then claps his hands and bawls out, *Aga ! Aga !* I have seen, I have seen. So provoking is this exclamation, that a man, though vanquished, will often commence another attack. An officer who has lost his situation is sure to have this salutation from those he has injured. Has a man been foiled in argument, failed in some feat he promised to perform, or in any way made himself ridiculous, the people shout aloud, *Aga, finished, finished, fallen, fallen !* Then they laugh and clap their hands till the poor fellow gets out of sight."—*Oriental Illustrations of Scripture.*

- 27 Let them shout for joy, and be glad,  
That favour my righteous cause :  
Yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified,  
Which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.
- 28 And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness  
And of thy praise, all the day long.

## PSALM XXXVI.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David, the servant of the LORD.

There seems no substantial ground for referring this Psalm, to the captivity, as suggested in B.C.B. in opposition to the Hebrew title, which emphatically ascribes it to "David, the servant of the Lord." "David describes the impiety and base practices of a wicked man, having reference most probably to some particular individual who was his enemy, and who was directing against him all the malignant feelings and motives by which he was actuated. Notwithstanding this hostility, David takes comfort and rests his security in the consideration of God's providence, which he observes to be exercised towards all His creatures, but especially to such as reverence His sacred name and live in obedience to His law. Then, under that holy influence which such contemplation of the Divine government was calculated to produce, he prays to God from the persecuting hand of his wicked opponent, and concludes with a prediction or declaration of hope that all who work iniquity would be overthrown."—*Phillips*.

- 1 THE transgression of the wicked saith within my heart,  
That there is no fear of God before his eyes.

PSALM xxxvi. 1. This verse has called forth no small amount of criticism from an apparent obscurity in the sense as a whole, though the words of which it is composed are of frequent occurrence, and taken separately present no difficulty in their interpretation. The majority of critics prefer the reading of most of the old versions, *his heart*, and adopt a rendering similar to that proposed in B.C.B. *The speech of transgression to the wicked is within his heart, there is no fear of God before his eyes*; but this is open to the objection that the word, *Nēūm*, is used in every other instance to introduce or succeed a specific declaration, as in the prophets, where it occurs very often in the phrase, *saith the Lord*. Retaining then in the present case this mode of translating as the only one sanctioned by the usage of the word, the substitution of *his* for *my* would render the succeeding clause, *there is no fear of God before his eyes*, less apposite, since it expresses what the conduct of the wicked man indicates to others rather than what is passing in his own heart; and this view is confirmed by the sense of the

- 2 For he flattereth himself in his own eyes,  
Until his iniquity be found to be hateful.
- 3 The words of his mouth *are* iniquity and deceit:  
He hath left off to be wise, *and* to do good.
- 4 He deviseth mischief upon his bed;  
He setteth himself in a way *that is* not good;  
He abhorreth not evil.
- 5 Thy mercy, O LORD, *is* in the heavens;  
*And* thy faithfulness *reacheth* unto the clouds.
- 6 Thy righteousness *is* like the great mountains;  
Thy judgments *are* a great deep:  
O LORD, thou preservest man and beast.
- 7 How excellent *is* thy lovingkindness, O God!

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word *Pēshā*, *transgression*, which denotes not the principle of sin in the heart, but the manifestation of it in overt acts. Bishop Horsley indeed renders the latter word, *the apostate, i.e., the devil*, but this is one of the bold strokes of his pen which has no better support than his own imagination. On these grounds it seems better to adhere to the common reading and translation, the difficulty attending which has, I think, been overrated, and which may be thus paraphrased, understanding, as already remarked, the Psalmist to refer to a particular individual, the singular number being continued throughout the four verses:—*The conduct of that wicked man clearly proves to my mind that he is altogether uninfluenced by any fear of God.*

2. In this verse there is also a little obscurity, arising probably from an ellipsis of some such expression as *in respect to*, between the two clauses. Supplying this, the literal translation would be, *For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, in respect to finding his iniquity to hate it*; that is, his self-flattery prevents his perceiving the hatefulness of his iniquity.

6. *Thy righteousness is like the great mountains*; literally, *as the mountains of God, i.e., great and lofty mountains*; so, *cedars of God, i.e., lofty cedars*, Psalm lxx. 11.; *Prince of God, i.e., an eminent prince*, Gen. xxiii. 6. Whatever is great or distinguished is often called by the Hebrews Divine or of Divine origin. "Although the whole of nature has been made by God, yet that is pre-eminently attributed to Him which, elevated by its greatness and glory above all that resembles it, directs the thoughts especially to His glory."—*Hengstenberg*.

Therefore the children of men put their trust  
Under the shadow of thy wings.

8 They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house :

And thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.

9 For with thee is the fountain of life :

In thy light shall we see light.

10 Oh continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee ;  
And thy righteousness to the upright in heart.

11 Let not the foot of pride come against me ;  
And let not the hand of the wicked remove me.

12 There are the workers of iniquity fallen :  
They are cast down, and shall not be able to rise.

## PSALM XXXVII.

*A Psalm of David.*

This is the third of the alphabetical psalms, and is divided into stanzas, consisting generally of four lines each, but in a few of three, five, or six, and commencing with the letters of the alphabet in regular course except the *Ain* and *Tau* portions. The latter would be rendered uniform by the omission of the conjunction *vau* at the beginning of verse 39, for which we have the authority of several MSS. and ancient versions, and the former may suitably commence with the second clause of verse 28, *They are preserved for ever* ; where the *Ain* is only preceded by the particle *lamed*, which is not essential to the sense. The Septuagint and Vulgate, however, insert a short line after this, which, if genuine, (but this is very doubtful) would furnish the initial letter ; and the stanza would commence thus :—

The unrighteous shall be punished,  
And the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.

This, like the preceding Psalm, has been assigned to the period of the captivity on purely conjectural grounds. "The reasons which have been brought against its Davidic origin," remarks Hengstenberg, "are of no weight, and for *his* being the author, there is, besides the superscription, the unquestionable fact that it forms the basis of a series of declarations in the Proverbs of Solomon. Then, few in Israel could, from actual experience, speak upon the theme of this Psalm as David could do ; few were so called by the leadings of Providence to oppose a barrier to the temptation which arose from the prosperity of the wicked. He had found many occasions for giving way to this temptation ; he had seen the ungodly Saul, the foolish Nabal, the corrupt faction of Absalom, sitting in the lap of fortune, while he languished in distress. David knew the temptation itself from his own experience, although God proved to him that He did not wholly abandon

him, and came to his help at the proper time. When he cut off the skirt of Saul he for a moment forgot this, *Be not angry [or fret not thyself] at the wicked*; if his conscience had not smitten him he might have proceeded from the skirt to the heart. Still more deeply did he underlie the temptation, when he swore he would cut off Nabal with his whole house. Had Abigail not gone to meet him, and by her voice awoke his slumbering better self, he would have experienced in himself the truth of his declaration in verse 8, that anger towards the wicked leads to a participation in their wicked deeds. With deep emotion of heart he says to her, (1 Sam. xxv. 33), 'Blessed be thy advice and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from *avenging myself with mine own hand*.' David finally had, from manifold experience, learned the truth of the sentiment upon which he here grounds the dissuasion from revenge, that quietness is the sure path to victory, that he who simply commits his cause to God shall certainly obtain a happy issue to it, and see the punishment of the wicked."

- 1 FRET not thyself because of evildoers,  
Neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.
- 2 For they shall soon be cut down like the grass,  
And wither as the green herb.
- 3 Trust in the LORD and do good ;  
So shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.
- 4 Delight thyself also in the LORD ;  
And he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.
- 5 Commit thy way unto the LORD :  
Trust also in him ; and he shall bring *it* to pass.
- 6 And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light,  
And thy judgment as the noonday.
- 7 Rest in the LORD,  
And wait patiently for him :  
Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way,  
Because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

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PSALM xxxvii. 3. *And verily thou shalt be fed.* Some render this as a moral precept, as *seek*, or, *be strong in faith*, or, *feed on truth*; but it is more in accordance with the scope of the passage to regard it as a promise. The Seventy and Vulgate read, *Dwell in the land and feed on its riches*. The best rendering appears to be nearly as in our own version, *So shalt thou dwell in the land and feed in security*.



- 8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath :  
Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.
- 9 For evildoers shall be cut off :  
But those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.
- 10 For yet a little while, and the wicked *shall not be* :  
Yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it *shall not be*.
- 11 But the meek shall inherit the earth ;  
And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.
- 12 The wicked plotteth against the just,  
And gnasheth upon him with his teeth.
- 13 The LORD shall laugh at him :  
For he seeth that his day is coming.
- 14 The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow,  
To cast down the poor and needy,  
And to slay such as be of upright conversation.
- 15 Their sword shall enter into their own heart,  
And their bows shall be broken.
- 16 A little that a righteous man hath is better  
Than the riches of many wicked.
- 17 For the arms of the wicked shall be broken :  
But the LORD upholdeth the righteous.

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9. *The earth*, or, "*the land*", probably the land of Judæa, given by God Himself as an inheritance to their fathers and their posterity for ever."  
—B.C.B.

14. *Such as be of upright conversation* ; literally, *the upright of way*, those who are upright in their conduct or course of life. Our translators use the word conversation in its original and comprehensive import, as denoting the conduct and behaviour of mankind in their intercourse with each other, and never in the sense of merely colloquial intercourse, to which it is usually restricted in the present day. It occurs frequently in the New Testament, but in the Old Testament only here and in Psalm l. 23.

- 18 The LORD knoweth the days of the upright :  
And their inheritance shall be for ever.
- 19 They shall not be ashamed in the evil time :  
And in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.
- 20 But the wicked shall perish,  
And the enemies of the LORD  
*Shall be* as the fat of lambs : they shall consume ;  
Into smoke shall they consume away.
- 21 The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again :  
But the righteous showeth mercy, and giveth.
- 22 For *such as be* blessed of him shall inherit the earth ;  
And *they that be* cursed of him shall be cut off.
- 23 The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD :  
And he delighteth in his way.

18. *The Lord knoweth, &c.*, that is, regardeth with approbation and favour. See note on Psalm i. 6.

20. *The enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs, &c.* The Seventy, Vulgate, and Arabic translators appear to have taken the latter word as a part of the verb *exalt*, and render, *The enemies of the Lord as soon as they are exalted to honour vanish ; as smoke they vanish away.* The Hebrew is literally, *the precious, or, preciousness of lambs* ; by which some understand *rich pastures* ; but the sense usually assigned to the passage, "that as the fat was wholly consumed in sacrifices by the fire on the altar, so the wicked shall consume away in the fire of God's anger," (B.C.B.), is so much more apposite and so decidedly favoured by the succeeding word, *into smoke shall they consume away*, that we must take the phrase in question to denote either *the choicest or best of lambs*, or, which seems preferable, *their fat*, the part most valued for that purpose and most quickly consumed. The words *shall be*, are, however, needlessly inserted by our translators, the stanza forming a complete triplet without them, thus :—

But the wicked shall perish,  
And the enemies of the Lord shall consume as the fat of lambs,  
Into smoke shall they consume away.

23. The word *good* is not in the Hebrew, and is unnecessary if we give to the conjunction the sense of *because* or *when*. *The steps of a man are ordered by the Lord, when He delighteth in his way ; i.e., the Lord will direct or prosper the steps of him whose ways please Him.*

- 24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down :  
For the LORD upholdeth *him with his hand.*
- 25 I have been young, and *now* am old ;  
Yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken,  
Nor his seed begging bread.
- 26 *He is* ever merciful, and lendeth ;  
And his seed *is* blessed.
- 27 Depart from evil, and do good ;  
And dwell for evermore.
- 28 For the LORD loveth judgment,  
And forsaketh not his saints ;  
They are preserved for ever :  
But the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.
- 29 The righteous shall inherit the land,  
And dwell therein for ever.
- 30 The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom,  
And his tongue talketh of judgment.
- 31 The law of his God *is* in his heart ;  
None of his steps shall slide.
- 32 The wicked watcheth the righteous,  
And seeketh to slay him.
- 33 The LORD will not leave him in his hand,  
Nor condemn him when he is judged.
- 34 Wait on the LORD, and keep his way,  
And he shall exalt thee to inherit the land :  
When the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.
- 35 I have seen the wicked in great power,  
And spreading himself like a green bay tree.
- 36 Yet he passed away, and lo, he *was* not :  
Yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.
- 37 Mark the perfect *man*, and behold the upright :  
For the end of *that man is* peace.
- 38 But the transgressors shall be destroyed together :  
The end of the wicked shall be cut off.
- 39 But the salvation of the righteous *is* of the LORD :  
*He is* their strength in the time of trouble.

- 40 And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them :  
He shall deliver them from the wicked,  
And save them, because they trust in him.

PSALM XXXVIII.

A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance.

The precise import of the expression, *to bring to remembrance*, in the titles of this and Psalm lxx., is uncertain. It may indicate their use by David himself, or by the Church, as commemorative of deep distress, or to bring the case of the sufferer in remembrance before God. The Seventy and Vulgate add, *respecting the Sabbath*; and the other old versions have additions equally inappropriate. Of the particular occasion of this Psalm we have no record. The mention of personal enemies is against the supposition alluded to in B.C.B., of its having been composed by David under some grievous affliction, either bodily or mental, or both, after his illicit intercourse with Bathsheba, as that period appears to have been one of outward ease and prosperity. "The Psalmist," remarks Hengstenberg, "is hard pressed by ungodly enemies. The sting of his pain in this temptation is the consideration perpetually true in itself, and in the Old Testament especially distinctly announced, that there is no suffering without sin, or that all suffering is punishment. He sees in his enemies so many accusers sent against him by God, and in their superior power a testimony that God was visiting him for his sins, which appear to him now in a very different light from what they had done during his prosperity. What he could easily have borne otherwise, prostrates him, when so considered, both in body and soul. In his distress he turns himself to the Lord with a prayer for deliverance from his enemies, which at the same time implies the forgiveness of his sins."

- 1 O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath :  
Neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.
- 2 For thine arrows stick fast in me,  
And thy hand presseth me sore.
- 3 *There is no soundness in my flesh,*  
*Because of thine anger ;*  
*Neither is there any rest in my bones,*  
*Because of my sin.*
- 4 For mine iniquities are gone over mine head :  
As an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.
- 5 My wounds stink *and* are corrupt  
Because of my foolishness.

- 6 I am troubled ; I am bowed down greatly ;  
I go mourning all the day long.
- 7 For my loins are filled with a loathsome *disease* :  
And *there is* no soundness in my flesh.
- 8 I am feeble and sore broken :  
I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.
- 9 Lord, all my desire *is* before thee ;  
And my groaning is not hid from thee.
- 10 My heart panteth, my strength faileth me :  
As for the light of mine eyes,  
It also is gone from me.
- 11 My lovers and my friends  
Stand aloof from my sore ;  
And my kinsmen stand afar off.
- 12 They also that seek after my life lay snares *for me* :  
And they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things,  
And imagine deceits all the day long.
- 13 But I, as a deaf *man*, heard not ;  
And *I was* as a dumb man *that* openeth not his mouth.
- 14 Thus I was as a man that heareth not,  
And in whose mouth are no reproofs.
- 15 For in thee, O LORD, do I hope :  
Thou wilt hear, O LORD my God.

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PSALM xxxviii. 6. *I am troubled* ; margin, *wearied*. Neither of these words conveys the force of the original, which would be better expressed by *distorted* or *distracted*.

7. *A loathsome disease*. Some render a *parching heat*, or *inflammation* ; but the former sense, or that of *wasting* or *consumption*, seems preferable.

10. The original of the last clause is very emphatic, literally : *And the light of mine eyes ! even they are not with me*. My eyes themselves are lost to me.

11. The Seventy and Vulgate appear to have read with a slight variation in several words. *My friends and my neighbours came into my presence, and stood*—stopped short or stood aghast. The other versions agree with the Hebrew text.

- 16 For I said, *Hear me*, lest *otherwise* they should rejoice over me :  
 When my foot slippeth, they magnify *themselves* against me.  
 17 For I *am* ready to halt,  
 And my sorrow *is* continually before me.  
 18 For I will declare mine iniquity ;  
 I will be sorry for my sin.  
 19 But mine enemies *are* lively, and they are strong :  
 And they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.  
 20 They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries ;  
 Because I follow *the thing that good is*.

16. The ellipsis indicated by the words in italics is better supplied by reference to verses 13 and 14. *For I said* (that is *to myself*) *I will not notice them, lest they rejoice over me*. So Mendlessohn explains: "For I said, if I reprove them it will be of no use to me; for they will laugh at me and magnify themselves against me, even at the moving of my foot, and say that there is no salvation for me in God because I have sinned."

19. The alteration of a letter in the Hebrew text (*chinnom* for *chayim*), which, instead of, *mine enemies are lively*, would substitute, *they who are mine enemies without cause*, is adopted by several critics as affording a clearer sense, and forming a more complete parallel with *they that hate me wrongfully*, in the next line. Bishop Lowth, in confirmation, refers to Psalm xxxv. 19, and lxi. 4, where these phrases are similarly associated, and remarks that a mistake which has disgraced the text above 2,000 years is thus corrected, he thinks beyond a doubt, by the parallelism, supported by the example of similar passages. The alteration however has not met with such general acceptance as the Bishop seems to have anticipated. It is indeed a mere conjecture in opposition to the authority of MSS. and versions; and had the text originally stood as supposed, it is very improbable that a copyist should have changed a familiar and easy mode of expression for one so much less so. At the same time, the text as it now stands does not present any difficulty to make an alteration necessary. The term frequently includes the idea of happiness or prosperity, and Yarchi explains it here as, *living in peace and happiness*. Thus the verse may be rendered: *Mine enemies being living, or prosperous, are become strong: And they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied*. "While the Psalmist finds himself in a state like to death (is dead while living) *they are living and powerful*."—Hengstenberg.

20. *Because I follow the thing that good is*. This seems hardly in keeping with the penitential character of the Psalm. The word *because* is in the

- 21 Forsake me not, O LORD :  
 O my God, be not far from me.  
 22 Make haste to help me, O LORD my salvation.

## PSALM XXXIX.

To the chief Musician, even to Jeduthun. A Psalm of David.

"*Jeduthun*, probably the same as *Ethan* (1 Chron. vi. 44), was one of the sons of *Merari*, and is supposed to have been one of the three masters of music, or leaders of bands, belonging to the temple service. It is therefore probable that *David* gave this Psalm to *Jeduthun* and his company to sing."—*B.C.B.* It is supposed that *David* composed this Psalm in connection with the preceding, and that the silence which he had there imposed upon himself (verses 13 and 14) forms the opening subject of this. Under severe suffering either of body or mind, or both, the Psalmist appears to have resolved to endure it without murmuring, and especially to refrain from uttering anything in the presence of the wicked, or of his enemies, unworthy of his character as the professed servant of God. In the depth of his sorrow he even abstained from speaking what was good or might have tended to his relief; but at length the vehemence of his feelings bursts forth in the language of prayer, yet characterized by the emotions of passion and impatience which had agitated his mind; complaining of the vanity of life, and desiring to know the extent of his remaining days upon earth. These feelings, however, eventually give place to those of penitent confession of sin, resignation, and calm trust in God. The Psalm is divided by *Selah* into three parts; the first and second terminating with the recurring phrase or "burden of the song:" *Verily, every man is vanity*. This, however, is expressed in the second with less vehemence than before; and each division marks a corresponding "progression in the sentiment. The first represents a state of moral agony; the second, the workings of a mind under the influence of prayer; the progress of those right and practical convictions at which the soul submitted to Divine teaching will always arrive; the third, the prayer of matured faith and repentance."—*Jebb*.

- 1 I SAID, I will take heed to my ways,  
 That I sin not with my tongue :  
 I will keep my mouth with a bridle,  
 While the wicked is before me.

Hebrew the same as for in the previous line, and signifies *instead of*, or *in return for*, and the sense of the verse appears to be: *They also that render evil for good are become mine adversaries, in return for my pursuing [their] good*.

PSALM xxxix. 1. *I said*; that is, as in verse 16 of the previous Psalm, *to myself, or in my heart, I resolved*.

- 2 I was dumb with silence,  
I held my peace, *even* from good ;  
And my sorrow was stirred.
- 3 My heart was hot within me,  
While I was musing, the fire burned :  
*Then* spake I with my tongue.
- 4 LORD, make me to know mine end,  
And the measure of my days, what it is ;  
*That* I may know how frail I am.
- 5 Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth ;  
And mine age is as nothing before thee :

2. *I held my peace, even from good.* Few portions of Scripture have been subjected to more diversity of interpretation than this. Of the ancient versions the Septuagint and Vulgate render, *I was silent from good* (in the plural) *words or things*; the Chaldee Targum, *I ceased from the words of the law*; others, *I was sorrowful for good, I withheld myself from good, I was silent for want of good, I was silent because my conscience reproached me.*—See Calmet. Modern expositions differ more widely. Some render: *I spake neither bad nor good.* Gesenius—“*I said nothing of their happiness, i.e., spake not enviously of the happiness of the wicked.*” Hengstenberg—“*I was silent not for good. My silence only aggravated my pain.*” The generality, however, understand the passage in one of the two following senses: *I abstained from, or disregarded what was pleasant or joyful*; or, as our translators intimate by inserting the word *even*: *I refrained from uttering even what was good, or might have relieved my sorrow.* These two interpretations seem decidedly preferable to either of the others, and as the proper meaning of the Hebrew verb is to refrain from *speaking*, the latter appears on the whole best supported. “*I deemed it better to observe entire silence, than to assert my innocence, or utter certain truths which might offend and irritate my enemies*; or, as St. Augustine explains: *In the fear of saying anything evil, I abstained from speaking what was good, but this only increased my sorrow.*”—*Calmet* *ab.*

4. *That I may know how frail I am*; rather, *how soon I shall cease [to live]*. To this effect all the ancient versions. The Psalmist appears already sensitively alive to the frailty of human life; but discovers an impatient wish to know the extent of his remaining term.

5. *My days as an handbreadth.* A familiar comparison in the east. “*What are the days of man? Only four fingers.*” “*My son has gone, and*



Verily every man at his best state *is* altogether vanity.  
Selah.

6 Surely every man walketh in a vain show.  
Surely they are disquieted in vain :  
He heapeth up *riches*, and knoweth not who shall gather  
them.

7 And now, LORD, what wait I for ?  
My hope *is* in thee.

8 Deliver me from all my transgressions :  
Make me not the reproach of the foolish.

9 I was dumb, I opened not my mouth ;  
Because thou didst *it*.

10 Remove thy stroke away from me :  
I am consumed by the blow of thine hand.

11 When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity,  
Thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth :  
Surely every man *is* vanity. Selah.

12 Hear my prayer, O LORD,  
And give ear unto my cry ;  
Hold not thy peace at my tears :  
For I *am* a stranger with thee,  
*And* a sojourner, as all my fathers *were*.

13 Oh spare me, that I may recover strength,  
Before I go hence, and be no more.

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has only had a life of four fingers." "You have had much pleasure; not so, it has only been the breadth of four fingers." "Is he a great landowner? Yes, he has about the breadth of four fingers." "I am told the hatred betwixt those people is daily decreasing. Yes, that which is left is about four fingers in breadth."—*Roberts's Illustrations of Scripture from the Hindoos*. The same author says in illustration of verse 11, that the moths in the east are very large and beautiful, but short-lived; but this does not appear appropriate to that passage properly understood: *Thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth*; more correctly, *Thou consumest as a moth his beauty*; that is, as a moth consumes a garment. The moth in scripture language is the instrument, not the object of destruction.

PSALM XL.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

"This Psalm is supposed to have been composed by David about the same time and on the same occasion as the two preceding,"—*B.C.B.* These three Psalms exhibit "the progress of the soul from great affliction and from the depths of a state almost resembling despair, to the comforts of religious consolation, and finally to unshaken security. The sufferer is now delivered from his troubles, *from the pit of noise, out of the mire and clay*, and his feet are set upon the stony rock, and into his mouth, which heretofore was dumb, has been put a new song, even praise unto his God. We know from Holy Scripture that a part of this Psalm is prophetic of our Lord; and many parts of the two preceding, such as the revilings and persecutions of unprovoked enemies, and the silence of their victim, have doubtless their antitype in his sufferings. Still the type and antitype are not to their whole extent parallel, since we are expressly reminded throughout that David's sufferings were on account of his own sins; and between these and the ineffable agonies of our Redeemer, who underwent them that He might take away the sins of the world, there is an immeasurable difference, both in their cause and in their nature."—*Jebb.* The concluding verses, 14–17, are almost word for word the same as the Seventieth Psalm. Some interpret the whole of this Psalm as a prophecy of the Messiah, representing Him as the speaker throughout. According to this view verses 1–5 predict His resurrection from the dead; verses 6–10 declare the inefficacy of the Mosaic sacrifices, and the readiness of Christ to execute the work appointed Him by the Father, to whom, in the concluding verses, He prays for Himself and the Church, and foretells the shame and vexation of the Jews and other opposers of His Gospel. Besides the anachronism which this interpretation involves, in making the resurrection of Christ precede His coming into the world, it is open to the objection already noticed in similar instances, that some portions are unsuitable to the dignity and character of the Redeemer; particularly verse 12, the attempts to reconcile which with the Messianic exposition are far from satisfactory; and further, that it takes too contracted a view of that part applied to Him by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. That "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams," and that the legal sacrifices were inefficacious in themselves to obtain the Divine favour, was a principle pervading the Mosaic economy, and constantly inculcated by the prophets; the apostle, therefore, in proving to the Hebrews the impossibility that the blood of bulls and of goats could take away sin, could not have employed a more cogent argument than by adducing a passage in which that principle is so strikingly enforced, and showing its pre-eminent fulfilment in Him whose life exemplified that obedience in absolute perfection, and in whose death the great and ultimate object of those sacrifices was accomplished.

- 1 I WAITED patiently for the LORD;  
And he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.
- 2 He brought me up also out of an horrible pit,

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PSALM xl. 2. *An horrible pit*; margin, *pit of noise*. Septuagint and Vulgate: *pit of misery*. The primary meaning of the word is *noise* or *tumult*—

Out of the miry clay,  
And set my feet upon a rock,  
And established my goings.

3 And he hath put a new song in my mouth,  
Even praise unto our God :  
Many shall see it, and fear,  
And shall trust in the LORD.

4 Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust,  
And respecteth not the proud,  
Nor such as turn aside to lies.

5 Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works *which*  
thou hast done,  
And thy thoughts *which* are to us-ward :  
They cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee :  
*If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than*  
can be numbered.

6 Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire ;  
Mine ears hast thou opened :

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whence that of going to ruin with a crash, or simply, *destruction*, which seems the proper sense here. The Syriac and Arabic translate, *the pit of perdition and the mud of corruption*, "figurative expressions to point out the dreary, dismal, ruinous state of sin and guilt, and the utter inability of a condemned sinner to save himself, either from the guilt of his conscience, or the corruption of his heart."—*A Clarke*.

3. *And he hath put a new song in my mouth*, i.e., given me a fresh theme for gratitude and praise.

4. *And respecteth not* (so as to imitate or depend upon) *the proud*, the self-sufficient, or self-righteous : *Nor such as turn aside to lies*, who place their trust in idols, or any false or delusive object. The Seventy render the clause : *Who hath not regarded vanities or lying madnesses*.

5. *They cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee* : rather, none, or nothing is to be compared with thee. So the ancient and many modern translations.

6. *Mine ears hast thou opened*, i.e., made me attentive or obedient to thy will. Some would render, *Mine ears hast thou bored*, i.e., made me thy servant for ever ; supposing the Psalmist to refer to the precept in Ex. xxi. 6 ; but if so he would probably have used the same verb as is there employed, and also the singular noun, as only one ear was bored on those occasions. "The Seventy render, *then a body hast thou prepared for me*, which is

Burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come :

In the volume of the book *it is* written of me,

8 I delight to do thy will, O my God :

Yea, thy law *is* within my heart.

9 I have preached righteousness in the great congregation :

Lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest.

10 I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart ;

I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation :

I have not concealed thy lovingkindness

And thy truth from the great congregation.

11 Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD :

Let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve  
me.

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followed by the Ethiopic and the Apostle Paul. Hence many learned men have supposed that instead of *אָנִים כְּרִית לִי* (*oznayim kareetha lee*), *my ears hast thou digged*, the original reading was *אָז גִּוַּח כְּרִית לִי* (*oz gewah kareetha lee*), which affords the sense proposed."—B.C.B. The word *then*, which is needed for the *supposed* original reading to account for its resemblance and change to the present Hebrew, is not in the Greek of the Septuagint, or the Epistle, or in either of the old versions, Ethiopic and Arabic, which follow the Septuagint: these versions, having been made from the Septuagint, add no authority to the reading. The latter indeed gives both readings, and the rest correspond with the present Hebrew. The import of the clause, as it stands in the Greek, appears to be: *Thou hast given me a body with which I am bound to serve and honour thee*; and the general sense is not affected by the variation.

7. The word *volume* is here used in its proper sense of *roll*, the ancient form of books, which were written on leather parchment, and rolled on cylinders of wood, as the MSS. of the Hebrew Bible still used in Jewish synagogues. There can be little doubt that the volume here referred to is the Pentateuch, which, with the addition probably of one or two of the succeeding books, and that of Job, comprised that portion of the Old Testament in existence when this Psalm was composed. *It is written of me*: literally, *upon me*, that is, *enjoined upon me as a duty*.—See 2 Kings xxii. 13, where the same expression occurs: "To do according to all that which is written concerning [Hebrew, upon] us." The words in the next verse nowhere occur as a prediction, but they express the spirit of many precepts in the Pentateuch enjoining obedience to the Divine commands, and their reception into the heart.—See particularly Deut. vi. 6, xxx. 14.

- 12 For innumerable evils have compassed me about :  
 Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me,  
 So that I am not able to look up ;  
 They are more than the hairs of mine head :  
 Therefore my heart faileth me.
- 13 Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me :  
 O LORD, make haste to help me.
- 14 Let them be ashamed and confounded together  
 That seek after my soul to destroy it ;  
 Let them be driven backward and put to shame  
 That wish me evil.
- 15 Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame  
 That say unto me, Aha ! aha !
- 16 Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee :  
 Let such as love thy salvation say continually,  
 The LORD be magnified.
- 17 But I *am* poor and needy ;  
 Yet the LORD thinketh upon me :  
 Thou *art* my help and my deliverer ;  
 Make no tarrying, O my God.

## PSALM XLI.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

Psalm xli. is by some considered to refer to Absalom's rebellion, and verse 9, either to Mephibosheth or Ahithophel. The words, *which did eat of my bread*, coincide indeed with the description of David's kindness to Mephibosheth (2 Sam. ix. 7, 11), but, as the accusation brought against him by Ziba of having joined Absalom's party proved to be false, it is not likely to be perpetuated as the subject of a Psalm. If, therefore, there is any truth in either of these conjectures, the latter is the more probable, but the

15. "The common version," remarks Boothroyd, "is not intelligible, for what can *reward of their shame* signify." By the change of a letter in the verb, as the Seventy appear to have read, it would stand, *Let them bear for a reward their shame*, i.e., let shame be their recompense. But it is not necessary to deviate from the Hebrew text, which may be rendered: *Let them be desolate or confounded by reason of their shame*, i.e., let them be thoroughly put to shame. *That say unto me Aha ! Aha !*—See on Psalm xxxv. 21.

general tenor of the Psalm seems more in accordance with the view that it was written on the same occasion as the three preceding, or some other occasion of the same kind.

- 1 BLESSED is he that considereth the poor :  
The LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.
- 2 The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive ;  
And he shall be blessed upon the earth :  
And thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.
- 3 The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing :  
Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.
- 4 I said, LORD, be merciful unto me :  
Heal my soul ; for I have sinned against thee.
- 5 Mine enemies speak evil of me,  
When shall he die, and his name perish ?
- 6 And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity :  
His heart gathereth iniquity to itself ;  
When he goeth abroad, he telleth it.

PSALM xli. 1. *The poor.* The Hebrew word denotes either an indigent person, or one feeble in respect to bodily powers, and hence sick or afflicted, as the epithet *poor* is often used by us.

3. *Thou wilt make ;* literally, *turn or change his bed in his sickness ;* “change his couch of pain into one of consolation and joy.”—*Hengstenberg.* A beautiful metaphor derived from the kind and skilful attention of a nurse in thus promoting the comfort and refreshment of her patient. Two different words are employed in the Hebrew ; couch substituted in one place would preserve the variation.

4. *I said.* The *I* is emphatic (being doubled in the Hebrew), the Psalmist here appropriating that to himself which in the preceding context is ascribed in general to the merciful. At the same time, “in the words, *for I have sinned against thee*, he announces the cause on account of which he needed healing.”—*Hengstenberg.* The expression, *Heal my soul*, may be understood either in a spiritual or physical sense, as *soul* often denotes the entire man. Probably both ideas were united in the Psalmist’s mind, agreeably to the scriptural view of the intimate connection between sin and suffering.—See Matt. ix. 5, &c.

5. *Mine enemies speak evil of me ; saying,* is here to be understood.

6. *He speaketh vanity ;* rather, *falsehood* : professing kindness and sympathy, but cherishing malice in his heart, to which he gives vent as soon as he departs.

- 7 All that hate me whisper together against me:  
Against me do they devise my hurt.
- 8 An evil disease, *say they*, cleaveth fast unto him :  
And *now* that he lieth he shall rise up no more.
- 9 Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted,  
Which did eat of my bread,  
Hath lifted up *his* heel against me.
- 10 But thou, O LORD, be merciful unto me,  
And raise me up, that I may requite them.
- 11 By this I know that thou favourest me,  
Because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.
- 12 And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity,  
And settest me before thy face for ever.
- 13 . Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel

8. *An evil disease*; literally, a word or thing of Belial. Belial denotes worthlessness, and usually, if not always, in the sense of moral depravity. So it is understood here by all the old translators, who appear to have read the two accompanying words with a variation of one letter in each from the present Hebrew, and render the clause: *They have determined an unjust word against me* (saying) *Now that he lieth, &c.* The common reading seems, however, to accord better with the context, giving the whole verse as spoken by the Psalmist's enemies, who exult over him as suffering under the Divine judgment. Boothroyd's translation seems to give the true sense:

His wicked deed is now poured upon him," &c.

9. The application of this verse by our Lord to the treachery of Judas has led some to interpret the whole Psalm, directly and exclusively, of the Messiah; an exposition refuted, says Hengstenberg, by verse 4, where the sufferer recognizes a just punishment for his sins.

13. *Amen, and Amen.* "That is, as the Seventy and Vulgate render, *Fiat, fiat. So be it! So be it!* With this Psalm ends the first of the five books into which the Hebrews have divided the Psalms."—*B.C.B.* "On this Doxology Kinchi remarks, 'They are the words of the poet giving thanks to Jehovah on his finishing the book, as is the custom of authors; and so he has done at the end of the first four books. (See Psalms lxxii., lxxxix., and cvi.) At the end of the fifth, which is the end of the whole book of Psalms, he gives praise in thirteen hallelujahs.' Mendelssohn adds that, in his opinion, the doxology was not written by the author of the Psalm, but at

From everlasting, and to everlasting.  
Amen, and Amen.

PSALM XLII.

To the chief Musician, Maschil, for [*or*, A Psalm giving instruction .of] the sons of Korah. -

This Psalm, and ten others, viz.—Psalms xliv., xlix., lxxxiv., lxxxv., lxxxvii., lxxxviii., are inscribed *for or to the sons* (i.e., descendants) of Korah. It appears from Numbers xxvi. 11 that the sons of Korah were not, like those of Dathan and Abiram, involved in the destruction of their father, and their descendants are mentioned in several passages of Chronicles. In 1 Chron. vi. 31—38, Heman, a member of that family, is said to have been one of those “whom David set over the service of song in the house of the Lord;” and, on occasion of the fast proclaimed by Jehoshaphat, the Korahites “stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice on high.”—2 Chron. xx. 19. It is not certain whether we are to understand from the titles that these Psalms were composed by the Korahites, or that they were specially committed to their care for public use. “Most critics, Jewish as well as Christian, have expressed their opinion that David wrote the forty-second Psalm, and committed it to the chief musician, to be sung by the posterity of Korah.” “This seems the right explanation of the title, and they probably sung to particular musical instruments to which the Psalm was especially adapted.”—*Phillips*. Some, who understand the title in the former sense, suppose that one of the sons of Korah composed the Psalm on David's behalf—“sang it as from the soul of David.”—*Hengstenberg*. But the vividness and depth of colour in which the mental picture is portrayed seem hardly to admit of the idea of its having been drawn by another hand than that of him who was himself the subject of it, and felt all that he describes, unless by one who could enter fully into his feelings. Bishop Horsley urges what he deems insuperable objections to the reference of this Psalm to David's flight from Absalom, alleging that this was only a temporary retreat, to enable him to oppose his rebellious subjects with more advantage, and that he was never in the extreme danger and defenceless condition, or exposed to the taunts which the Psalm represents, the reproaches of Shimei being instantly reproved by his attendants. When, however, we consider how deeply David's feelings were wounded by the circumstances connected with that event, embittered as it may probably have been by some particulars not recorded in the narrative, that he appears, from 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26, to have felt himself in such danger as to doubt of his safe return to his capital and to the sanctuary, and that the geographical notices in verse 6 correspond exactly with his encampment at Mahanaim, there seems nothing in the phraseology of the Psalm incompatible with his condition on that sorrowful occasion. “I cannot help esteeming this Psalm,” says Bishop Lowth, “one of the most beautiful specimens of the Hebrew elegy. The author of this elegant complaint, exiled from the temple, and from the public exercise of religion, to the extreme parts of Judea, per-

the time the Psalms were collected the compiler wrote it at the end of each portion. The form of words we find in 1 Chron. xvi. 36.”—*Phillips*.



secuted by his numerous enemies, and agitated by their reproaches, pours forth his soul to God in this tender and pathetic composition."

- 1 AS the hart panteth after the water brooks,  
So panteth my soul after thee, O God.
- 2 My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God :  
When shall I come and appear before God ?
- 3 My tears have been my meat day and night,  
While they continually say unto me, Where is thy God ?
- 4 When I remember these things,  
I pour out my soul in me ;  
For I had gone with the multitude,  
I went with them to the house of God,  
With the voice of joy and praise,  
With a multitude that kept holyday.
- 5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul ?  
And *why* art thou disquieted in me ?  
Hope thou in God : for I shall yet praise him  
For the help of his countenance.

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PSALM xlii. 1. "*The hart, naturally of a hot and arid constitution, suffers much from thirst in the oriental regions. He therefore seeks the fountain or stream with intense desire, particularly when his natural thirst has been aggravated by the pursuit of the hunter, and, panting and braying with eagerness, precipitates himself into the water.*"—*Illustrated Commentary.*

1, 2. "The Psalmist, seeing in his exclusion from the sanctuary a mark of the Divine displeasure, regards it at the same time as exclusion from God, and return of the favour of God and return to the sanctuary as inseparably united."—*Hengstenberg.* See 2 Sam., referred to above.

4. For, rather *that, I had gone with the multitude ; I went with them, or conducted them.* The Hebrew of this clause is somewhat obscure, and the old translators render differently. The Chaldee—*When I shall pass the shadow, I shall be strengthened alone in the camps of the just.* The others, *For I will go to the place of thy wondrous tabernacle : or, under thy strong protection to the house of God, &c.* Our own version, however, seems best supported on critical grounds, and it accords best with the context to refer the passage to *past* privileges, at the remembrance of which the Psalmist pours out his soul in plaintive strains.

5. Most of the ancient versions read here as in verse 11, and verse 5 of the next Psalm, *the health of my countenance and my God*, but this occasions an abruptness in the commencement of verse 6, and it is more likely that the

- 6 O my God, my soul is cast down within me :  
Therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan,  
And of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.
- 7 Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts ;  
All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.
- 8 Yet the LORD will command his lovingkindness in the day-time,  
And in the night his song *shall be* with me,  
And my prayer unto the God of my life.
- 9 I will say unto God my rock,  
Why hast thou forgotten me ?  
Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy ?
- 10 As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me ;  
While they say daily unto me, Where is thy God ?
- 11 Why art thou cast down, O my soul ?  
And why art thou disquieted within me ?  
Hope thou in God : for I shall yet praise him,  
Who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

PSALM XLIII.

"This Psalm is evidently a continuation of the preceding, and had the same author, and they are written as one in forty-six MSS. The sameness of subject, similarity of composition, and return of the same burden in both, are sufficient evidence of this opinion."—*B.C.B.*

variation originally existed than that it arose from the errors of transcribers. Such verbal differences in the "burden of the song" we find in Psalms xxiv. 8, 10; xxxix. 5, 11; xli. 1, 7, 11.

6. Mahanaim, the place of David's retreat from Absalom, was in the district eastward of Jordan, here called *the land of Jordan and of the Hermonites*, or, more correctly, *the Hermons*; Mount Hermon, a ridge of Anti-libanus, forming its northern boundary. The Psalmist uses the plural, either as denoting a range of mountains, or giving the name of the most eminent to those of the district generally. *The hill Mizar*, or *the little hill*, may refer to one in his more immediate locality.

10. *As with a sword in my bones*; or, with the old translators, *as the breaking of my bones*. Some have inferred, from the taunt in this and the third verse, that the Psalm was composed by an Israelite in a land of heathens; the language, however, does not necessarily imply a reproach on *his God*, but upon *himself*, as abandoned by Him.

- 1 JUDGE me, O God, and plead my cause  
Against an ungodly nation :  
Oh deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.
- 2 For thou *art* the God of my strength :  
Why dost thou cast me off ?  
Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy ?
- 3 Oh send out thy light and thy truth ;  
Let them lead me ; let them bring me  
Unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.
- 4 Then will I go unto the altar of God,  
Unto God my exceeding joy :  
Yea, upon the harp will I praise thee,  
O God, my God.
- 5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul ?  
And why art thou disquieted within me ?  
Hope in God : for I shall yet praise him,  
*Who is the health of my countenance, and my God.*

## PSALM XLIV.

To the chief Musician, for the sons of Korah, Maschil.

This is another of the Korahite Psalms. As *the sons of Korah* for successive generations took part in the choral service, those inscribed to them may have been composed at various and distant periods. The apparent difficulty of reconciling the profession of fidelity to God in verses 17—22 of the present Psalm, with the view which it discloses of the depressed condition of the people, whose national calamities were usually the punishment of their apostasies, together with the application of verse 22 by the apostle, (Rom. viii. 36,) to himself and his fellow-believers, has led some to interpret it entirely in reference to the primitive Christians; but however applicable it might be, either in whole or in part, to any future condition of the Church, there can be no reasonable doubt of its having had an historical basis in the circumstances of the times when it was penned, though we have not the means of arriving at any certainty as to its occasion and date. Some assign it to the invasion of Sennacherib, who, as appears from 2 Kings xviii. 13, 14, had taken the fenced cities of Judah, and laid the nation under tribute, when his designs against Jerusalem were miraculously frustrated. Hengstenberg thinks a secure starting point for the historical exposition is furnished by Psalm lx., which it resembles in its general bearing, and in some striking coincidences of expression. (Compare verses 5—10, and 26, with Psalm lx. 1, 3, 10, 12.) The events referred to in the title of Psalm lx. are narrated 2 Sam. viii. 3—13, and 1 Chron. xviii. 3—12, and, from a comparison of

these passages with an incidental notice in 1 Kings xi. 15, 16, it has been inferred that while David was engaged in the war with the Syrians, the Edomites made an irruption into his kingdom, the disastrous consequences of which, as indicated by the revenge inflicted on them by Joab, who is said to have destroyed all their males, and by the mention of his returning to bury his slain countrymen, Hengstenberg supposes to have been the occasion of the present Psalm, previously to the victory over the Edomites commemorated in Psalm lx. The words, verse 11, *thou hast scattered us among the heathen*, he remarks, do not necessarily imply more than a carrying away of the smaller sort, such as might occur in any hostile invasion, and Israel's loss in battle from the heathen was not estimated by the common standard, for so fully were they persuaded of the necessity of salvation from their Divine election, that small losses went much to their heart, and occasioned painful questions and supplications. "The consciousness," he adds, "of fidelity to the Lord, was scarcely possible at any other period than that of David. Hence the joyful hope of victory, verses 4—8, and the prayer in verses 23—26, which rests on the supposition that the distress could be removed by a stroke, all point to the relations of his time, in which, behind the foreground of misery and distress, there always lay concealed a rich background of salvation, of strength, and joyful hope." The Psalm is referred by others to the period preceding or during the captivity, or that of Antiochus Epiphanes, and the Maccabees. The prevalence of idolatry before the captivity, and its direct punishment in that event, seem to render the professions in verses 17—22 incompatible with either of those times, and the allusion to a national army, additionally so with the latter, as well as with the succeeding period, while the Jews remained subject to foreign princes; and when roused by the atrocities of Antiochus to shake off the yoke of oppression, their warlike operations, under the patriotic Maccabean leaders, were a series of almost uninterrupted successes, hardly admitting of the plaintive language of verses 9—16. In other respects, the Psalm seems not inappropriate to the time of Antiochus; for the Jews, after the return from Babylon, never as a nation relapsed into idolatry, and though individuals apostatized under his cruel persecutions, yet those who adhered to their religion in that time of severe trial might say, *For thy sake are we killed all the day long, we are counted as sheep for the slaughter*.

- 1 WE have heard with our ears, O God,  
Our fathers have told us,  
*What* work thou didst in their days,  
In the times of old.
- 2 *How* thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand,  
And plantedst them;

PSALM xliv. 1. *We have heard with our ears. A* pleonastic mode of expression, as *seeing with the eyes, crying with the voice, &c.*, denoting distinctness and certainty.

2. *And cast them out.* The rendering in B.C.B., *How thou didst afflict the peoples* (of Canaan), and *madest them* (the Hebrews) *to shoot forth*, seems preferable. *Causedst them to shoot or spread forth*, thus preserving the

- How* thou didst afflict the people,  
And cast them out.
- 3 For they got not the land in possession by their own sword,  
Neither did their own arm save them :  
But thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy  
countenance,  
Because thou hadst a favour unto them.
- 4 Thou art my King, O God :  
Command deliverances for Jacob.
- 5 Through thee will we push down our enemies :  
Through thy name will we tread them under that rise up  
against us.
- 6 For I will not trust in my bow,  
Neither shall my sword save me.
- 7 But thou hast saved us from our enemies,  
And hast put them to shame that hated us.
- 8 In God we boast all the day long,  
And praise thy name for ever. *Selah.*
- 9 But thou hast cast off, and put us to shame ;  
And goest not forth with our armies.
- 10 Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy ;  
And they which hate us spoil for themselves.
- 11 Thou hast given us like sheep *appointed* for meat ;  
And hast scattered us among the heathen.
- 12 Thou sellest thy people for nought,

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parallelism between this and the preceding line, by referring *them* in each case to *our fathers*.

4. *Thou art my King, O God!* The Hebrew is emphatic, *Thou art He, my King, O God!* i.e., Thou, the same who wast the God of our fathers, art my King and my God!

10. *Spoil for themselves, i.e.,* plunder us for their own gain, and to their heart's desire.

12. The two lines of this verse express the same idea in different terms. God is said in Scripture to sell His people when He gives them up to the will of their enemies. (See Deut. xxxii. 30 ; Judg. ii. 14 ; iii. 8 ; Is. l. 1.) The additional phraseology used here for *nought*, and *without price*, is understood

- And dost not increase *thy wealth* by their price.
- 13 Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours,  
A scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.
- 14 Thou makest us a byword among the heathen,  
A shaking of the head among the people.
- 15 My confusion is continually before me,  
And the shame of my face hath covered me,
- 16 For the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth ;  
By reason of the enemy and avenger.
- 17 All this is come upon us ;  
Yet have we not forgotten thee,  
Neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.
- 18 Our heart is not turned back,  
Neither have our steps declined from thy way ;
- 19 Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons,  
And covered us with the shadow of death.
- 20 If we have forgotten the name of our God,  
Or stretched out our hands to a strange god ;
- 21 Shall not God search this out ?  
For he knoweth the secrets of the heart.
- 22 Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long ;  
We are counted as sheep for the slaughter.

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by Boothroyd to import, *thou takest no other people in their stead*. Perhaps, however, it may be more correctly explained as a poetical mode of expression, simply denoting *to reject as utterly worthless*. These words were literally and awfully verified in the dispersions of the Jews by the Romans, when multitudes were sold into slavery at the lowest price, and many others perished for lack of purchasers.

19. *Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons*—i.e., left us defenceless and exposed to the malice and cruelty of our enemies, like persons in a wilderness enveloped in darkness or gloom, and exposed to the attacks of huge serpents or other noxious animals. The imagery is similar to that of Psalm xxiii. 4, where see Note.

22. "See Rom. viii. 36, where this verse is quoted as referable to the early Christians, and 1 Cor. xv. 31, where *dying daily* is applied by St. Paul to himself. The whole expression may be regarded as hyperbolic, indicating a continual suffering."—*Phillips*.

- 23 Awake, why sleepest thou, O LORD ?  
 Arise, cast us not off for ever.
- 24 Wherefore hidest thou thy face,  
 And forgettest our affliction and our oppression ?
- 25 For our soul is bowed down to the dust :  
 Our belly cleaveth unto the earth.
- 26 Arise for our help,  
 And redeem us for thy mercies' sake.

## PSALM XLV.

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim, for the sons of Korah, Maschil, [cr,  
 of instruction]. A Song of loves.

The word *Shoshannim*, in the title, some refer to the subject of the Psalm, and give various explanations of it, as denoting, under the name of *lilies*—*virgins, saints, &c.*; but its connection with *the chief musician*, as in Psalms iv—vi., viii., ix., &c., indicates rather a musical instrument. The sense of *hewachord* is very appropriate, but does not seem well supported on etymological grounds, the letters being more numerous than requisite if derived from *sheth, sis* (as suggested in *B.C.B.*); and as the word elsewhere signifies *lilies*, it seems more probable that a cymbal, or some instrument resembling that flower in form, is intended. *A song of loves*; more correctly, *the beloved ones* (feminine), virgins or bridal maids. This Psalm is in the form of an epithalamium, or nuptial song, but some parts of it are so inapplicable to any marriage of Solomon, or similar event, that it seems best, with the generality of commentators of the ancient Hebrew, as well as the early Christian Church, to interpret it exclusively in reference to the Messiah, symbolizing His spiritual glories and victories, His union with the Church, and her gifts and graces. Apart from this view, there seems indeed nothing to justify its introduction into the canon of Scripture. It is, however, not improbable that the splendour of Solomon's reign, and its attendant circumstances, formed the basis of the allegorical imagery, rather than that it was composed by David.

- 1 MY heart is inditing a good matter :  
 I speak of the things which I have made touching the king :

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PSALM xlv. 1. *Inditing* by no means conveys the force of the original, literally *boiling, bubbling up, or bursting forth, as water. My heart is teeming with goodly matter, or a noble theme. I speak, &c.* The word *of*, the insertion of which is peculiar to some of our English versions, is improper, as it makes the Psalmist's works, instead of *the King*, the subject of his poem. *I speak what I have made or composed touching the King, or rather to the King*, to whom, in the next verse, the address is directed. According to the Masoretic

- My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.
- 2 Thou art fairer than the children of men :  
Grace is poured into thy lips :  
Therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.
- 3 Gird thy sword upon *thy* thigh, O Most Mighty,  
With thy glory and thy majesty.
- 4 And in thy majesty ride prosperously,  
Because of truth and meekness and righteousness ;  
And thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.
- 5 Thine arrows *are* sharp in the heart of the king's enemies ;  
*Whereby* the people fall under thee.

pointing, it would read, *I say my works are for the king.* To this effect the Bishops' Bible, *I will dedicate my works unto the king.* *My tongue*, &c. The process of speaking, simply, is quicker than that of writing, but the point lies in the composing. *I shall compose and speak as fluently as the most expert scribe can write.*

2. The symbolic language of the Psalm attributes to the king the grace of personal beauty and dignity, which among the ancients was deemed an important requisite in kings and heroes, or other eminent persons. See in the choice of Saul, 1 Sam. ix. 2 ; x. 23, 24. So Homer represents Hector and Achilles, and Virgil, *Æneas*. "This description of Christ is not really at variance with the fifty-third of Isaiah, where the prophet declares that He hath no form or comeliness, for the latter refers to His low condition as man, the former to His greatness and splendour as the head of a spiritual kingdom, which is to embrace the whole earth."—*Phillips*. *Grace is poured into thy lips—i.e., thou art eminently endued with the gift of eloquence and the graces of speech.* The New Testament shows how this was realized in Jesus Christ. The Nazarenes wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth ; and on another occasion it was said, "Never man spake like this man." *Therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.* As if the Psalmist had said, the excellency of beauty, the excellency of wisdom, they denote that thy blessing is the blessing of God, which endureth for ever.—*Mendelssohn in Phillips*.

4. *Meekness and righteousness.* The two nouns in the Hebrew are combined without a conjunction. The *meekness of righteousness*, or *meekness—righteousness* ; "righteousness which primarily and chiefly manifests itself in meekness. Meekness is the kernel of righteousness. Compare Zeph. ii. 3."—*Hengstenberg*.

5. *The king's enemies.* "A dignified expression for *thy enemies*."—*Hengstenberg*.



- 6 Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever :  
The sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.
- 7 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness :  
Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee  
With the oil of gladness above thy fellows.
- 8 All thy garments *smell* of myrrh, and aloes, *and* cassia,  
Out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.

6. This passage is cited in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in proof of the deity of Christ; and the attempts to give it a lower sense are irreconcilable with any common-sense or grammatical construction of the text. For an ample refutation of them see Phillips, also Dr. J. P. Smith's observations on this Psalm, in his "Scripture Testimony to the Messiah."

8. The Orientals are very partial to perfumes, and use them profusely. *Myrrh* is the well known exudation of one or more species of the Balsamodendron, a small tree found principally in Arabia and Abyssinia. The *ahaloth* of the Hebrews, which our translators render *aloes*, must not be confounded with the plant used in medicine, which is disagreeable in odour, as well as nauseous in taste, nor with any other known to us by that name. It is considered to denote the agallochum, or eagle-wood of the East Indies, highly valued for its intense fragrance. *Cassia*, in our Bible, represents two Hebrew words, one of which (*ketziath*) occurs only here. It has been supposed to be an oil expressed from the cassia, but late researches have tended to identify it with the costus of the Greeks and Romans, and the koost of the Arabians and Indians, highly valued by the Chinese as an ingredient in their incense. *Ivory palaces*. The inlaying of the walls of state apartments with precious stones, metals, wood, and other substances, was extensively practised by the ancients, and ivory is mentioned as so employed, both by the sacred writers and the Greek and Roman poets. See 1 Kings xxii. 39; Amos iii. 15; Homer, *Odyssey*, book iv., l. 73; Virgil, *Æneid*, book x., l. 137; Horace, book ii., ode 18; Lucan *Pharsal.*, book x., l. 119, and the Illustrated Commentaries. *Palaces*. The Hebrew word signifies also a temple, or its inner sanctuary, and some understand it here in a corresponding sense in relation to a palace—a wardrobe or cabinet for robes of state or perfumes. *Whereby*. The Hebrew is only *from*, requiring *which* or *whence* to be supplied. Such an ellipsis after the preposition is unusual, but the same word occurs in Jer. li. 27, as the name of a district, probably, of Armenia, and if so used here may denote a country celebrated for its ivory. Thus the verse may stand: *Myrrh, and aloes, and cassia (are) all thy garments*: they are as fragrant as if made of those perfumes. *From the palaces (or cabinets) of ivory of Minni they make thee glad*: alluding to the exhilarating effects of sweet odours on the spirits.

- 9 Kings' daughters *were* among thy honourable women :  
Upon thy right hand did stand the queen,  
In gold of Ophir.
- 10 Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine,  
ear ;  
Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house ;
- 11 So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty :  
For he *is* thy LORD ; and worship thou him.
- 12 And the daughter of Tyre *shall be there* with a gift ;  
*Even* the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour.
- 13 The king's daughter *is* all glorious within :  
Her clothing *is* of wrought gold.
- 14 She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needie-  
work :  
The virgins her companions that follow her  
Shall be brought unto thee.
- 15 With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought :  
They shall enter into the king's palace.
- 16 Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children,  
Whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.
- 17 I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations :  
Therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.

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9, 10. By *the queen* is understood the Church, the spouse of Christ, or as some suppose, the Jewish as the basis of the Christian Church ; by *the king's daughters*, the kingdoms which should be brought under His dominion ; *forgetting their father's house*, renouncing their former idolatries, &c. *Daughter*, in Scripture, frequently signifies a people. See Isaiah i. 8 ; xxiii. 10, 12, &c. The daughter of Tyre is particularly mentioned as bringing her offering, and we find that many of the Tyrians flocked to Christ (Mark iii. 8) ; and the Apostle Paul found disciples there.—Acts xxi. 3, 4.

13. *The king's daughter is all glorious within*—i.e., in her apartment ; not mentally, as sometimes explained, a sense not supported by the usage of the Hebrew word, or harmonizing with the succeeding lines ; yet, as the personal splendour of the queen in the interior of her palace is employed to represent the spiritual graces of the Church, that meaning is indirectly obtained.

## PSALM XLVI.

To the chief Musician for [or, of] the sons of Korah. A song upon Alamoth.

"*Alamoth* was probably the name of a musical instrument of the harp kind, though, as this Psalm is of the responsive kind, some suppose it denotes the *virgins* who sang it with the sons of Korah."—*B.C.B.* "A fine consolatory Psalm, wherein God's marvellous working is praised, as He protects His little flock of believers, and preserves them through such great necessities of war and persecutions, that it might seem as if the world was going to wreck."—*Arndt.* The *Selah* marks three divisions, the first commencing, and the second and third terminating with the ground thought or "burden of the song," *God is our refuge*, slightly varied in form, and each exhibiting a gradation of feeling. In the first, the expression of confidence in Divine protection is rather negative than positive—*We will not fear*; in the second, it is accompanied with religious joy, and the certainty and nearness of deliverance declared; in the third, the whole is consummated, and the universal sovereignty of God proclaimed.—See *Jebb.* "It is clear, from verse 8, that the fundamental idea of the Psalm had been made living to the writer by some particular historical occasion," but what that was cannot with certainty be determined. It has been assigned to the subjugation of several peoples by David, and subsequent peace recorded (2 Sam. viii.); to the deliverance of Jehoshaphat and his people (2 Chron. xx.); to that of Jerusalem by the miraculous destruction of Sennacherib's army; and to the re-establishment of the people in Jerusalem, on their return from Babylon. The language of the Psalm seems to imply deliverance from a hostile attack, and therefore to comport better with the second or third of these events, to either of which verse 10 is particularly appropriate.

1 GOD is our refuge and strength,

A very present help in trouble.

2 Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed,

And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the  
sea ;

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PSALM xli. 2, 3. These words of the Psalmist have often been compared with the lines of Horace, Car. book iii. ode 3, which are thus translated by Francis :—

"The man in conscious virtue bold,  
Who dares his secret purpose hold,  
Unshaken hears the crowd's tumultuous cries,  
And the impetuous tyrant's angry brow defies;  
Let the wild winds that rule the seas,  
Tempestuous, all their horrors raise;  
Let Jove's dread arm with thunders rend the spheres,  
Beneath the crush of worlds undaunted he appears."

On which Calvin remarks, that "such a man as the poet draws has never been found. This greatness of soul, therefore, is based solely on the pro-

- 3 *Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled,  
Though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.*  
Selah.
- 4 *There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the  
city of God,  
The holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.*
- 5 *God is in the midst of her ;  
She shall not be moved :  
God shall help her, and that right early.*
- 6 *The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved :  
He uttered his voice, the earth melted.*
- 7 *The LORD of hosts is with us ;  
The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.*
- 8 *Come, behold the works of the LORD,  
What desolations he hath made in the earth.*
- 9 *He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth ;  
He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder ;  
He burneth the chariot in the fire.*

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tection of God, so that they who rest in Him can truly affirm that they are not only without fear, but also safe and secure, though the whole world should be involved in ruin."—*Hengstenberg*.

4. Having spoken of the commotions of nations under the figure of convulsions in the natural world (for verse 6 may be accepted as an explanation of verses 2 and 3), the Psalmist compares the support and consolation enjoyed by the Church under the Divine protection to the fertilizing and refreshing streams of a river. Jerusalem was not situated on a river, but the beautiful image was probably suggested to his mind by

"Silva's brook, that flowed  
Fast by the oracle of God."

6. *He uttered his voice, the earth melted.* The omnipotence of God, in controlling the affairs of men, is here declared with majestic brevity, in language apparently derived from the action of the electric fluid, whose accompanying sound is frequently termed the voice of God.

9. There is probably an allusion here to the custom of heathen nations of burning the arms of conquered enemies in honour of their gods.

- 10 Be still, and know that I *am* God :  
 I will be exalted among the heathen,  
 I will be exalted in the earth.  
 11 The LORD of hosts *is* with us ;  
 The God of Jacob *is* our refuge. Selah.

## PSALM XLVII.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm for [*or, of*] the sons of Korah.

Psalm xlvii. has been generally considered to have been written on the bringing of the ark, either into the tabernacle of Mount Zion by David, or from thence into the temple by Solomon, and the language of verses 5—7 strikingly accords with the magnificent description (2 Chron. v. 11—13) of the solemnities attending the deposit of that sacred symbol of the Divine presence in its final resting place. Several Jewish and Christian commentators have, however, adopted a Messianic interpretation, and whatever may have been its immediate occasion, it is very applicable to the establishment and universal dominion of the kingdom of Christ.

- 1 OH clap your hands, all ye people ;  
 Shout unto God with the voice of triumph.  
 2 For the LORD most high *is* terrible :  
*He is* a great King over all the earth.  
 3 He shall subdue the people under us,  
 And the nations under our feet.  
 4 He shall choose our inheritance for us,  
 The excellency of Jacob whom he loved. Selah.

10. *Be still (or cease), and know that I am God.* If addressed to the enemies of God, the import of these words would be, *Cease from your vain attempts to oppose my counsels* ; but it seems more suitable to the context to understand them as spoken to His people, and equivalent to the precept, “Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord,” given to the Israelites at the Red Sea (Ex. xiv. 13) ; and also to Jehoshaphat and his people on the occasion above referred to.—2 Chron. xx. 17.

PSALM xlvii. 3, 4. It seems better, with the ancient versions, to render the verbs here in the past tense, *He hath subdued, he hath chosen*, as having immediate reference to the conquest of the Canaanites, and the settlement of the Israelites in their inheritance. *The excellency of Jacob.* The excellent lot or portions of the tribes of Jacob, *whom or which He loved* ; which he chose as the seat of His worship, and favoured with so many privileges.

- 5 God is gone up with a shout,  
The Lord with the sound of a trumpet,
- 6 Sing praises to God, sing praises:  
Sing praises unto our King, sing praises.
- 7 For God is the King of all the earth :  
Sing ye praises with understanding.
- 8 God reigneth over the heathen :  
God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.
- 9 The princes of the people are gathered together,  
Even the people of the God of Abraham :  
For the shields of the earth *belong* unto God :  
He is greatly exalted.

PSALM XLVIII.

A Song and Psalm for [or, of] the sons of Korah.

*A Song and Psalm.* There is no conjunction in the Hebrew, and one term is doubtless intended to qualify the other, perhaps, as generally explained, *A Psalm to be set to music*; but they are often used synonymously, and the precise distinction is uncertain. "This Psalm is supposed to have been sung at the dedication of the second temple, though some think it was composed on the victory obtained by Jehoshaphat."—2 Chron. xx. 1–30. It seems more appropriate to the deliverance in the reign of Jehoshaphat than to any other event with which we are acquainted. It does not indeed appear that the confederate kings came in sight of Jerusalem, as verse 5 might imply, but, "by a just and striking poetical figure, the city and invaders are brought close together, and the object of their hearts is represented as seen by their eyes."—Jebb. It is remarkable that the narration of that event is followed by the mention of Jehoshaphat's joining the wicked king of Israel, Ahaziah, in making ships to go to Tarshish, which, before proceeding on their voyage, were broken at Ezion-geber—2 Chron. xx. 35,

7. *Sing ye praises with understanding*; rather, *sing a song of praise*, or an *instructive song*—*Maschil*, the same word as in the title of Psalm xxxii. and others, which appears to signify properly a *song giving instruction*, but may probably be used in a more general sense.

9. The first *people* is in the plural, *peoples*; the second may be read as the singular of the same noun, or as the preposition *with*. *The princes of the peoples are gathered* (or *joined*) *with the God of Abraham*—i.e., Gentiles have joined with Jews in worshipping God. *The shields of the earth*, &c. If taken literally, the sense would be that instruments of protection are in God's hand; but it is generally understood as *chief persons*, corresponding with *princes* above.

and 1 Kings xxii. 48. To this circumstance the Psalmist may refer in verse 7, either by way of simile in describing the discomfiture of the hostile army, or as a warning by contrasting this signal visitation of God to check the presumption of the king, with the protection previously afforded him. By the early fathers this Psalm is considered as predicting, by way of figure, the greatness, glory, and durability of the Christian Church. The first verse has been supposed to have belonged originally to the preceding Psalm, and it is so written in a few Hebrew MSS., but it connects at least as well with the present, and it is probable that the similarity of the conclusion of one to the commencement of the other was an inducement to the compiler to place them in juxtaposition. A like remark may apply to the last two words of this Psalm, *unto (or upon) death*, which have been thought to belong to the title of Psalm xlix., of which death is particularly the subject.

- 1 GREAT is the LORD,  
And greatly to be praised,  
In the city of our God,  
In the mountain of his holiness.
- 2 Beautiful for situation,  
The joy of the whole earth is mount Zion,  
On the sides of the north,  
The city of the great King.
- 3 God is known in her palaces for a refuge.
- 4 For, lo, the kings were assembled,  
They passed by together.
- 5 They saw it, and so they marvelled;  
They were troubled, and hasted away.

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PSALM xlviii. 2. This verse may be more correctly translated, *beautiful in elevation, or a beautiful eminence, the joy of the whole land, is Mount Zion. On her north side is the city of the great King.* Mount Zion, the joy of the whole land, not only as its metropolis, but as the seat of Divine worship, to which all the tribes repaired for the joyful celebration of their solemnities, was not situate northward in relation either to the rest of Jerusalem, or to the country at large; but the temple, the city of the great King, was on the northern side of Zion. Hengstenberg supposes the sides of the north here, and in Is. xiv. 13; to refer to a prevalent notion in the east, of a mountain of the gods rising in the extreme north, and forming an intermediate link between earth and heaven. "What the heathen dreamed of such a mountain, that Mount Zion was in reality." But as the present text at least admits of a simple geographical explanation, there is no need to resort to an imaginary one.

4, 5. The laconic rapidity with which the Psalmist depicts the assembling, the approach, the consternation, and the flight of the kings, has been aptly compared with Cæsar's celebrated "*veni, vidi, vici.*"

- 6 Fear took hold upon them there,  
And pain, as of a woman in travail.
- 7 Thou brestest the ships of Tarshish  
With an east wind.
- 8 As we have heard, so have we seen  
In the city of the LORD of hosts,  
In the city of our God :  
God will establish it for ever. Selah.
- 9 We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God,  
In the midst of thy temple.
- 10 According to thy name, O God,  
So is thy praise unto the ends of the earth :  
Thy right hand is full of righteousness.
- 11 Let mount Zion rejoice,  
Let the daughters of Judah be glad,  
Because of thy judgments.
- 12 Walk about Zion, and go round about her :  
Tell the towers thereof ;
- 13 Mark ye well her bulwarks,  
Consider her palaces ;  
That ye may tell *it* to the generation following.
- 14 For this God is our God for ever and ever :  
He will be our guide *even* unto death.

PSALM XLIX.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm for [or, of] the sons of Korah.

“ Nothing certain is known respecting the author, time, or occasion of this most excellent hymn. It seems, says Dr. Dodd, to be a meditation on the vanity of riches, and the usual haughtiness of those who possess them. As a remedy to this, he sets before them the near approach of death, from which no

8. *As we have heard*—i.e., from our fathers, the wonders which thou hast done for thy people, *so have we now seen for ourselves*.

10. This verse seems to express a similar sentiment: *thou hast realised all that the glory of thy name would lead us to expect from thee*.

11. Mount Zion is probably here put for Jerusalem at large, and the daughters of Judah for the other towns and cities, which in Scripture language are often so designated.



riches can save, in which no riches can avail. The author considers the subject he is treating as a kind of wisdom concealed from the world, a mystery, an occult science with respect to the generality of mankind."—*B.C.B.*

- 1 HEAR this, all ye people ;  
Give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world :
- 2 Both low and high,  
Rich and poor, together.
- 3 My mouth shall speak of wisdom ;  
And the meditation of my heart *shall be* of understanding.
- 4 I will incline mine ear to a parable :  
I will open my dark saying upon the harp.
- 5 Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil,

PSALM xlix. 4. *A parable.* "There is great latitude in the signification of the Hebrew word. Primarily it denotes any similitude by which another thing is expressed, as an illustration of that thing which is meant, and this may be done by fiction, fable, or riddle. Hence we find it employed to denote a *proverb* as well as a *parable*, and this circumstance seems to have had considerable influence on the writers of the New Testament, who in some places have used them as convertible terms. Compare the Greek of Luke iv. 23, and John x. 6, with the English version. In this passage I apprehend the word *maschal* is intended to express a *proverb*, although a proverb not consisting entirely of one concise sententious phrase, like the proverbs of Solomon, but one which declares fully, and illustrates by figure and otherwise, the general truth that the prosperity of rich wicked men is vanity."—*Phillips.* *My dark saying* ; literally, an intricate speech, *enigma*, or *riddle*, as in the story of Samson ; but the word appears also to be used, as in the present case, for a measured or ornate composition, characterized not so much by obscurity as by importance and depth. Some expositors have strained the text of parts of this Psalm to extract recondite meanings, in accordance, as they conceive, with the design of the writer as here declared ; but it is more probable that the degree of obscurity which now attaches to certain passages arises from the difficulties incident to the literary remains of a remote age and country, rather than to any intention on his part to write what was enigmatical or unintelligible to his fellow-countrymen and contemporaries. We find precisely the same terms employed in the exordium of Psalm lxxviii. 2, though that Psalm consists of a clear and plain recital of the dealings of God with His people.

5. *The iniquity of my heels ; my footsteps, i.e., my ways ;* or, as some explain it, *my latter days.* The meaning of the phrase is not very apparent, and if

- When the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about ?
- 6 They that trust in their wealth,  
And boast themselves in the multitude of their riches ;
- 7 None of *them* can by any means redeem his brother,  
Nor give to God a ransom for him :
- 8 (For the redemption of their soul is precious,  
And it ceaseth for ever :)
- 9 That he should still live for ever,  
And not see corruption :
- 10 For he seeth *that* wise men die,  
Likewise the fool and the brutish person perish,  
And leave their wealth to others.
- 11 Their inward thought *is*, *that* their houses *shall continue* for ever,

it has any sense, the iniquity of my heels must be in some way or other *my iniquity* ; which, unless we take it as an answer to, and not, as it appears to be, a part of the question with which the verse opens, cannot be the meaning of the Psalmist, for this would afford the strongest reason why he *should* fear. The rendering, *my supplanters or treaders down*, which is well supported, removes every difficulty. “ *My supplanters, akaivay, from akav, to supplant, defraud.*—See Gen. xxvii. 36 ; Jer. ix. 4 ; xvii. 9. To the same effect the Syriac and Arabic, ‘ Why should I fear in the evil day, when the iniquity of my enemies compasses me about.’ ”—*B.C.B.*

7–9. This passage is variously construed and expounded, but the most clear and satisfactory sense appears to be obtained by making verse 8 parenthetical. The same expression as is here rendered, *redemption of the soul*, occurs in the Hebrew of Ex. xxvi. 30, *ransom of his life*, and xxx. 12, *ransom for his soul*, where provision is made in certain cases by which a man might avert the immediate stroke of death by a pecuniary payment, but the Psalmist declares that nothing can purchase ultimate exemption from the common lot of man, so that he should still live for ever and not see corruption. The price is too great for man to pay, and the attempt must *cease, or fail, for ever*. It is equally true that man cannot redeem from spiritual death, and the fathers apply this passage to Christ, who possesses that power, being God as well as man.

11. “ Or, *Their grave is their house for ever, their dwelling-place through all generations, though their names are celebrated over countries.* All the ancient versions, instead of קִרְבּוֹם (*kirbom*) *their inward part*, seem to have read,

- And their dwelling places to all generations ;  
 They call *their* lands after their own names.
- 12 Nevertheless man *being* in honour abideth not :  
 He is like the beasts *that* perish.
- 18 This their way is their folly :  
 Yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah.
- 14 Like sheep they are laid in the grave ;  
 Death shall feed on them ;  
 And the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning ;  
 And their beauty shall consume  
 In the grave from their dwelling.
- 15 But God will redeem my soul  
 From the power of the grave :  
 For he shall receive me. Selah.
- 16 Be not thou afraid when one is made rich,  
 When the glory of his house is increased ;
- 17 For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away :  
 His glory shall not descend after him.

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קברם (*kivrom*), *their grave*."—B.C.B. This reading arises from the mere transposition of two letters ; but the common reading and translation are supported by Psalms v. 10, lxii. 4, and other passages, and are "much more consistent with the spirit of the argument."—*Phillips*

12. The old versions, except the Chaldee paraphrase, for *abideth not*, read here as in the concluding verse, *understandeth not*, but the former is most probably genuine, affording another instance of variation in the "burden of the song," as noticed on Psalm xlii. 5.

14. *Like sheep they are laid in the grave, death shall feed on them* ; rather, *death shall be their shepherd, or rule over them*. "As the shepherd takes care of or rules his sheep, and drives them into the fold, so death rules the wicked, and drives them into the grave." *And the upright shall have dominion over them*, or, *shall trample upon them*. "The pious men who are treated with disdain by the rich and haughty shall stand on the graves of these latter, and tread upon them as it were when shut up in the tomb."—*Phillips*. In the morning, i.e., early, soon, in which sense the expression elsewhere occurs ; or it may be here used in reference to the *night* scene of the shepherd driving his flock into their fold ; which supplies the imagery in the previous clause.

- 18 Though while he lived he blessed his soul :  
 And *men* will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself.  
 19 He shall go to the generation of his fathers ;  
 They shall never see light.  
 20 Man *that is* in honour and understandeth not,  
 Is like the beasts that perish.

PSALM L.

A Psalm of [*or, for*] Asaph.

The title ascribes this Psalm to Asaph, and the same name occurs also in the titles of eleven others, viz., Psalms lxxiii. to lxxxiii. We read of an eminent person of this name appointed by David as one of the singers and musicians (1 Chron. vi. 39; xv. 17, 19), who appears also to be mentioned as a composer of Psalms in 2 Chron. xxix. 30, where it is said Hezekiah "commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David and of Asaph the seer." There seems no reason why he should not have been the author of the present Psalm: but some of the others which bear the same name evidently belong to later times. "The fundamental thought that the sacrifice of the heart is alone well pleasing to God, is also declared in the following Psalm composed by David, which on account of this very agreement has been placed immediately after it."—*Hengstenberg*. The language of the opening verses has led to the exposition of this Psalm as a prediction of the calling of the Gentiles, the abrogation of the Mosaic ritual, and the final judgment of mankind; but that of the body of the Psalm, to which verses 1-6 are only introductory, does not sustain this hypothesis, being an expostulation of God with His *covenant* people, warning them against dependence upon the merely outward observances of religion. The more correct view appears to be that of Amyrald, and adopted by Rosenmüller and Hengstenberg, that the Psalmist, in order to give weight and impressiveness to the great truth he wishes to enforce, that the performance of sacrifices without the worship of the heart and holiness of life cannot obtain the Divine favour, introduces his subject by a magnificent exordium, in which God is represented as descending on Mount Zion, to pronounce judgment on *his people*, and discriminate between the formalist or ungodly, and the true worshipper. To render the scene still more solemn and august, the sacred poet summons all the inhabitants of the world to be

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18. "We have here one of those sudden changes of person so frequent in the Psalms. Not only is the rich man accustomed to applaud himself, but he is wont to be surrounded by a company of flatterers who are ever busy in cheering him in the career of his own indulgences and vices. In Mendelssohn's Beor, the rich man is supposed to be apostrophizing himself in the latter member of this verse, saying to himself: *And they that come after thee will praise thee if thou doest good to thyself by thy works.*"—*Phillips*.

present, and after the example of Moses (Deut. iv. 26; xxxii. 1), calls heaven and earth to witness the judgment; and further, as fire and tempest accompanied the promulgation of the law on Mount Sinai, so God appears in the same majesty to disclose its misapprehended import on Mount Zion.

- 1 THE mighty God, *even* the LORD, hath spoken,  
And called the earth,  
From the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.
- 2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,  
God hath shined.
- 3 Our God shall come,  
And shall not keep silence :  
A fire shall devour before him,  
And it shall be very tempestuous round about him.
- 4 He shall call to the heavens from above, .  
And to the earth, that he may judge his people.
- 5 Gather my saints together unto me ;  
Those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.
- 6 And the heavens shall declare his righteousness :  
For God *is* judge himself. Selah.
- 7 Hear, O my people, and I will speak ;  
O Israel, and I will testify against thee :  
*I am* God, *even* thy God.
- 8 I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices,  
Or thy burnt offerings, *to have been* continually before me.
- 9 I will take no bullock out of thy house,  
*Nor* he-goats out of thy folds.

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PSALM l. 1. *The mighty God, even the Lord*; the original exhibits three essential names of the Deity: *El, Elohim, Jehovah*; *God, Almighty, Jehovah*. We have here another instance of the disadvantage of rendering the latter by *the Lord*.—See on Psalm viii. 1.

8. *To have been*; rather, *which* or *they have been continually before me*; or the couplet may be rendered by supplying only the word *are* :—

*I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices,*

*And thy burnt offerings are continually before me.*

“Not the outward sacrifices which ye regularly bring, but something much greater is the object of my accusation.”—Hengstenberg.

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- 10 For every beast of the forest *is* mine,  
*And* the cattle upon a thousand hills.
- 11 I know all the fowls of the mountains :  
*And* the wild beasts of the field *are* mine.
- 12 If I were hungry, I would not tell thee :  
 For the world *is* mine, and the fulness thereof.
- 13 Will I eat the flesh of bulls,  
 Or drink the blood of goats ?
- 14 Offer unto God thanksgiving ;  
 And pay thy vows unto the Most High :
- 15 And call upon me in the day of trouble :  
 I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.
- 16 But unto the wicked God saith,  
 What hast thou to do to declare my statutes,  
 Or *that* thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth ?
- 17 Seeing thou hatest instruction,  
 And castest my words behind thee.
- 18 When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him,  
 And hast been partaker with adulterers.
- 19 Thou givest thy mouth to evil,  
 And thy tongue frameth deceit.
- 20 Thou sittest *and* speakest against thy brother ;  
 Thou slanderest thine own mother's son.
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10. *And the cattle upon a thousand hills ; or, the cattle upon the hills by thousands*, for the words will admit of either construction.

11. *I know all the fowls of the mountains.* All the old versions read, *fowls of heaven*, which is the usual mode of expression, but the other is not inappropriate. The Chaldee Targum gives a most extraordinary paraphrase of the succeeding line : " And the wild cock whose feet stand on the earth and his head reaches to heaven, sings before me."

13. The Psalmist probably alludes to the gross ideas entertained by the heathen, whose " priests taught the people that the gods *fed* on the *odour* of the sacrifices, and represented them as complaining of being starved when they were withheld."—*A. Clarke.*

- 21 *These things hast thou done, and I kept silence ;  
Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as  
thyself :  
But I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine  
eyes.*
- 22 *Now consider this, ye that forget God,  
Lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.*
- 23 *Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me :  
And to him that ordereth his conversation aright  
Will I show the salvation of God.*

## PSALM LI.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bath-sheba.

The spirit of deep repentance and contrition of soul which this Psalm breathes is strikingly appropriate to the condition of David on the occasion referred to in the title. Against the correctness of the latter, however, some expressions which it contains have been urged as insuperable objections. These objections, which are stated at large and answered by Hengstenberg, are mainly the three following. First: "According to the narrative, David had had announced to him immediately the pardon of his sin; here he first implores this most earnestly." But it appears to have been by the visit of Nathan that David was first aroused to a proper sense of his guilt; and that he "was enabled instantly to appropriate to himself the pardon of which Nathan assured him, is not so much as hinted. This must have been the more difficult to him, the deeper his fall had been in proportion to the grace already bestowed on him. With justice does Calvin remark, 'Although God, through the promise of forgiveness, freely invites us to peace, we are still to lay to heart our guilt, that deeper pain may penetrate our hearts. Hence it comes to pass that, with the small measure of our faith, we cannot at once take in the entire fulness of the Divine grace which had been brought to us.'—Hengstenberg. Second: The words in verse 4, *Against thee, thee only have I sinned*, are, it is alleged, inconsistent with the fact that David's crimes inflicted deep injury on the objects of them, and were an outrage upon the whole order of civil society. This objection, however, is evidently untenable, as it would apply with equal force to verse 14, where the Psalmist expressly

21. *I will reprove thee and set them or it, i.e., my charge or ground of complaint, in order before thine eyes.* "He declares that they will soon be drawn into open light, and compelled to see with their eyes the shameful deeds which they had imagined they could conceal from the eyes of God."—Calvin.

23. *His conversation, i.e., course of life.*—See on Psalm xxxvii. 14.

prays to be delivered from *bloodguiltiness*. The passage has been variously explained. The substitution of *before* for *against*, as proposed in B.C.B., does not remove the difficulty, since it would not, any more than the latter, comport with the word *only* taken in the strictest sense; for David's transgression with Bathsheba, as appears from the narrative, was known to others besides the guilty participant; and Joab became his accomplice in effecting the subsequent destruction of her husband. Another explanation is, that David, as the sovereign of those whom he had injured, was not subject to their judgment, but to that of God only. But it seems most satisfactory to consider the words in question as simply indicating that David's object in this devout effusion of his heart was to confess his guilt only as regarded his relation to God; and to Him alone in fact could he now make confession and ask forgiveness, for Uriah was dead, and to Bathsheba he had made all the reparation in his power. "The difficulty," remarks Hengstenberg, "vanishes as soon as it is perceived that what makes an offence against a neighbour, a sin, is his relation to God, that is, his bearing God's image, and having God for his Redeemer, so that in him God is offended. The more lively and faithful the conviction of sin is, the more readily will the soul penetrate through the shell in these transgressions against his neighbour into the kernel." The language too is substantially the same as that of Nathan to David (2 Sam. xii. 9, 10), and of David's reply (verse 13), where the *only* is merely wanting in form, and the Psalmist in this verse may be considered as acquiescing in the justice of the sentence pronounced through the mouth of the prophet on that occasion. The third objection is founded on verses 18, 19, which have been understood to imply that the walls of Jerusalem had been laid waste, and that without a temple, and far from the holy land, sacrifices could not be acceptably offered; and on these grounds some who concur in ascribing the body of the Psalm to David, suppose these verses to have been added during the captivity. But the prayer is, not that God would *build again*, but simply *build* the walls, which at the time the Psalm was composed might probably not have been completed; and the import of the two verses appears to be a prayer that David's sins might not be visited on his people, but that God would continue to bless his Church and to favour the growing prosperity of Jerusalem, with a promise that their gratitude should be shown by sacrifices. The last verse has been thought to clash in sentiment with verses 16 and 17, but there the Psalmist speaks of outward sacrifices apart from or in comparison with those of the heart; here of *sacrifices of righteousness*, those offered in sincerity and faith.

- 1 HAVE mercy upon me, O God,  
According to thy lovingkindness:  
According unto the multitude of thy tender mercies,  
Blot out my transgressions.
- 2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity,  
And cleanse me from my sin.
- 3 For I acknowledge my transgressions:  
And my sin is ever before me.
- 4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,



- And done *this* evil in thy sight :  
 That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest,  
 And be clear when thou judgest.
- 5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity ;  
 And in sin did my mother conceive me.
- 6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts :  
 And in the hidden *part* thou shalt make me to know wisdom.
- 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean :  
 Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- 8 Make me to hear joy and gladness ;  
 That the bones *which* thou hast broken may rejoice.
- 9 Hide thy face from my sins,  
 And blot out all mine iniquities.
- 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God ;  
 And renew a right spirit within me.
- 11 Cast me not away from thy presence ;  
 And take not thy Holy Spirit from me.
- 12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation ;  
 And uphold me *with thy* free spirit.
- 13 *Then* will I teach transgressors thy ways ;  
 And sinners shall be converted unto thee.
- 14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God,

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PSALM li. 5. *Behold I was shapen* ; more correctly, *brought forth in iniquity*, &c. Some have attempted to affix a more limited sense to this verse, but it does not appear to admit of any fair construction short of a declaration of the general corruption of human nature. "David's innate proneness to sin is here confessed, not as an excuse for what he had done, but rather as an acknowledgment of his duty to exercise greater watchfulness and increased diligence in applying the means of grace for suppressing his evil inclinations."—*Phillips*.

7. *Hyssop* was used for the sprinkling of blood, in ceremonial purifications, and in the cleansing of the leper, and is here employed figuratively in reference to the purification of the heart by the Holy Spirit. See Lev. xiv. 4—6 ; Numb. xix. 6, &c.

8. *The bones* ; here put for the whole bodily structure, as in Psalm vi. 2, xxxii. 3, xxxviii. 3.

14. Some, by *righteousness*, here understand *mercy* or *clemency*, but this is not the proper meaning of the word. "The righteousness of God is here

- Thou God of my salvation :  
*And my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.*
- 15 O LORD, open thou my lips ;  
*And my mouth shall show forth thy praise.*
- 16 For thou desirest not sacrifice ; else would I give it :  
*Thou delightest not in burnt offering.*
- 17 The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit :  
*A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*
- 18 Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion :  
*Build thou the walls of Jerusalem.*
- 19 Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness,  
*With burnt offering and whole burnt offering :*  
*Then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.*

PSALM LII.

To the chief Musician. *Maschil, A Psalm of David, when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech.*

This Psalm seems very appropriate to the circumstances referred to in the title and narrated in 1 Sam. xxi. 7, xxii. 9-22, where it appears that Doeg not only brought to Saul the accusation which led him to command the destruction of the priests, but after others had refused, became his ready instrument in executing that atrocious sentence.

- 1 WHY boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man ?  
*The goodness of God endureth continually.*
- 2 Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs ;  
*Like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.*

the property according to which He gives to every one his own : to those who penitently return to Him, the forgiveness of their sins, which He must grant them according to His compassion, and which He promises to them.”—*Hengstenberg.*

PSALM lii. 1, 2. The last clause of the first verse seems inapposite to the context, and the old versions indicate some variations in the original text. The Septuagint and Vulgate : “ Why, O mighty man ! boastest thou of iniquity in thy mischief ? Continually thy tongue deviseth mischief.” The Syriac : “ Against the innocent thy tongue meditateth iniquity continually, &c.” “ The tongue here also comprehends the spiritual part, whose organ it is.”—*Hengstenberg.*

- 3 Thou lovest evil more than good ;  
*And lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah.*
- 4 Thou lovest all devouring words,  
*O thou deceitful tongue.*
- 5 God shall likewise destroy thee for ever,  
 He shall take thee away,  
 And pluck thee out of *thy dwelling place*,  
 And root thee out of the land of the living. *Selah.*
- 6 The righteous also shall see, and fear,  
 And shall laugh at him :

5. *He shall pluck thee out of thy dwelling place.* The Hebrew is simply *out of thy tent or tabernacle*, by which some understand the sanctuary, and consider the words as equivalent to a sentence of excommunication; but the sense given by our translators seems to harmonize better with the next line.

6. There seems no substantial ground for substituting *rejoice* for *fear*, as proposed in B.C.B. The similarity of the two verbs, *see* and *fear*, in the original text, exhibiting a paranomasia, which is "a favourite poetic artifice among the Hebrews, is an evidence in favour of the received reading. The fear is not a slavish but a childlike one, such as always arises in the minds of believers when God manifests Himself in His glory."—*Hengstenberg*. *And shall laugh at him.* Hengstenberg quotes from Arndt the following, which, with his usual quaintness, has much point: "There is a twofold laughter, one when a man out of an evil spirit of revenge laughs at his enemy. This no Christian virtuous mind does, but it exercises compassion towards an enemy. But the other sort of laughing arises from a consideration of the wonderful judgment and righteousness of God, as when a man sins so presumptuously that he cares neither for God nor man, and will contend with God; as Pharaoh says, I ask nothing of the Lord, nor will I let Israel go, and soon thereafter was made to sink in the Red Sea. Is it not a matter of ridicule for a man to fight against God? and God gives him a fillip in the ear, so as to make him fall, or God commands the vermin to plague such great kings as Pharaoh. Herod would himself be God, and was eaten up of worms. Is not this a great God? Should not one laugh at this, and adore God's judgment? Is it not laughable that the king of Assyria threatens Hezekiah that he would send so many horses and footmen into his land as would be sufficient with the soles of their feet to drink up Jordan, and there would not be enough of dust in the land for every one to fill his hand withal; while yet in one night they were all slain in the camp by the angel of the Lord?"

- 7 *Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength ;  
But trusted in the abundance of his riches,  
And strengthened himself in his wickedness.*
- 8 *But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God :  
I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.*
- 9 *I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done it :  
And I will wait on thy name ;  
For it is good before thy saints.*

PSALM LIII.

To the chief Musician upon Mahalath. Maschil, *A Psalm of David.*

Compare Psalm xiv. "Which of these two Psalms is the original, and which the copy, how the variations arose, and at what time the Psalms were composed, are inquiries which cannot now be satisfied."—*Phillips*. A comparison of one with the other seems, however, to justify the conclusion of Hengstenberg, that Psalm xiv. was the original, being characterised by greater simplicity of expression, while, as regards the alterations generally in Psalm liii., "the rare and the uncommon, the strong and the elevated, are substituted for the common and the simple;" such alterations having been made not improbably, in part at least, by the writer himself on a subsequent occasion, in adaptation to existing circumstances, and eventually the compilers, unwilling to suppress either copy, retaining both. In doing so "they certainly acted in the mind of the author of the changes himself, who did not intend by *his* form to set aside the other, but only claimed for it a place beside the other. Each has its peculiar beauties and characteristics, and it is most justly remarked by Venema, that no alteration occurs which does not provide a sense excellent in both Psalms, and suited to the scope."—*Hengstenberg*. It has been generally concluded from the last verse, as well as one or two other passages, that this Psalm was composed during the captivity, and therefore that the title, which assigns it to David, was either affixed erroneously, or because it was based on one of David's, but altered in adaptation to existing times. In the latter case, it seems extraordinary that, though we have two copies varying in several particulars, the Psalm of David has not been preserved in its original form; and, in the former case, that if such was the obvious inference from the expressions alluded to, a title so manifestly incongruous should have been affixed. The passages in question, besides the last verse, are verse 4 of both copies, and verse 5 of Psalm liii., which differs from verses 5 and 6 of Psalm xiv. That the expression in verse 4, *who eat up my people as they eat bread*, does not, however suitable, necessarily apply to *heathen* oppressors, is proved by the use

8. *Like a green olive tree in the house of God.* "Not that there were olive trees planted in God's house, but the Psalmist was in God's house, full of spiritual vigour, as the olive was in its proper place and soil."—*A. Clarke*, ab.

of a parallel phrase in Micah iii. 3, in reference to the internal relations of the Israelites; and, as remarked by Augustine, "those eat the people who draw only profit from them, and do not employ their station for the glory of God, and the salvation of those over whom they are placed." A similar remark will apply to verse 5 (of Psalm liii.), which may denote the "oppression of the pious by the ungodly, under the image of a siege, which God raises by shattering the besieging enemies, so that their bones, formerly the seat of their strength, cover the field of battle."—*Hengstenberg*. But if taken literally in reference to the ruin of the Babylonians, to which the words seem very appropriate, we may suppose them to have been penned in connection with the concluding verse, during the interval between the taking of Babylon by the Medes and Persians, and the release of the captive Jews. With respect to the last verse, it is urged by Hengstenberg, who advocates the Davidic origin of the entire Psalm, that the first clause does not comport with the circumstances of the captivity; for that though Daniel prayed with his face towards Jerusalem, out of regard for what had been and would be again there, yet the captives could not expect their deliverance to *come out of Zion*, now that the temple was profaned and destroyed, and the kingdom of God had no longer its centre there; and that the succeeding phrase is sometimes used in the sense of release from affliction, and restoration to prosperity, as where the Lord is said to have *turned the captivity of Job*.—Job xlii. 10. See also Jer. xxx. 18; Ezek. xvi. 53. The former remark does not seem to be of much weight, for though the Jews might not literally expect deliverance from Zion, there appears no more impropriety in using that mode of expression, as denoting their reliance on God for help, than in turning their faces thither when addressing Him in prayer. The verse, however, will certainly admit of the interpretation for which Hengstenberg and some others contend, though the phrase in question is generally used in the more literal and obvious sense. Some, indeed, understand it of the temporary exile of David and his friends during Absalom's rebellion; but the terms appear too comprehensive to be so applied, and the latter portion of the Psalm, in both copies, from verse 4 inclusive, certainly assumes more of a collective or national character than the first part, which treats of the general depravity of mankind individually, a circumstance rather in favour of the supposition that neither of them exhibits the Psalm entirely in an original form.

- 1 THE fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God.*  
Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity :  
*There is none that doeth good.*
- 2 God looked down from heaven upon the children of men,  
To see if there were *any* that did understand,  
That did seek God.
- 3 Every one of them is gone back :  
They are altogether become filthy ;  
*There is none that doeth good, no, not one.*
- 4 Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge ?

Who eat up my people *as* they eat bread :  
They have not called upon God.

- 5 There were they in great fear, *where* no fear was :  
For God hath scattered the bones of him that encampeth  
*against* thee :  
Thou hast put *them* to shame,  
Because God hath despised them.

- 6 O that the salvation of Israel *were come* out of Zion !  
When God bringeth back the captivity of his people,  
Jacob shall rejoice, *and* Israel shall be glad.

# PSALM LIV.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth. Maschil, *A Psalm* of David, when the Ziphims came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us ?

“The title informs us that David’s taking up a refuge among the mountaineers of Ziph, from the hot pursuit of Saul, gave occasion to the composition of this Psalm. The history is read in 1 Sam. xxiii., where we learn that, betrayed by those among whom he was dwelling, he expected to be delivered into the hands of his powerful pursuer. In this distress, he prays to God in the words of verses 1-3 ; but on a sudden, when he beheld the enemy retiring in order to arrest the progress of a foreign invader, he breaks out into expressions of confidence in God, and of gratitude for his deliverance from the destruction with which he had been menaced.”—*Phillips*. The two parts are distinguished by *Selah*.

- 1 SAVE me, O God, by thy name,  
And judge me by thy strength.  
2 Hear my prayer, O God ;  
Give ear to the words of my mouth.  
3 For strangers are risen up against me,

PSALM liv. 1. *Save me, O God, by thy name* (or *for thy name’s sake*), *and judge me by* (or *because of*) *thy strength*. The word *judge* often denotes the advocacy of the cause of the oppressed, and here indicates the righteousness of David’s cause, which emboldens him to implore the Divine power for his support.

3. For זֵרִים (*zairim*), *strangers*, twenty-one MSS. have זֵדִים (*zaidim*), *the proud*, but all the old versions, except the Chaldee, support the received reading, which admits of ready explanation, as metaphorically designating

And oppressors seek after my soul :  
They have not set God before them. Selah.

- 4 Behold God is mine helper :  
The LORD is with them that uphold my soul.  
5 He shall reward evil unto mine enemies :  
Cut them off in thy truth.  
6 I will freely sacrifice unto thee :  
I will praise thy name, O LORD ; for it is good.  
7 For he hath delivered me out of all trouble :  
And mine eye hath seen *his desire* upon mine enemies.

### PSALM LV.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth. Maschil, A Psalm of David.

This Psalm was evidently composed by David during the rebellion of Absalom. "The consternation and distress expressed in verses 4-8, describe the king's state of mind when he fled from Jerusalem, and marched weeping up the Mount of Olives. The *iniquity cast upon* the Psalmist answers to the complaints artfully raised against the king by his son, of a negligent administration of justice, and to the reproach of cruelty cast upon him by Shimei. The *equal*, the *guide*, and the *familiar friend*, we find in Ahithophel, the confidential counsellor, first of David, afterwards of Absalom.

David's pursuers, who, though of the same tribe, were as bitter and hostile towards him as if they were of a different religion and country, which is the literal import of the term.

4. *The Lord is with them that uphold my soul, or support my life.* "The Psalmist makes two parties, the opponents and the helpers; and is full of triumphing confidence as he sees the Lord on the side of the latter. That he must have had other helpers besides the Lord, we must not conclude from the plural. This is an ideal circumstance, and denotes the class, the party, which in reality might have been embodied in an individual. Quite analogous is Psalm cxviii. 7; Judges xi. 35."—Hengstenberg.

6. *I will freely sacrifice unto thee*; that is, with a free-will offering, in contradistinction to one required by a statute or a vow by which a person had bound himself.

7. *His desire.* These words are not in the Hebrew, but something equivalent to them is supplied by modern translators generally, as well as by the Chaldee. All the other ancient versions, however, render literally, *mine eye hath looked* (or *looked down, despoit*—Vulgate) *upon mine enemies*. The latter appears very correctly to represent the original, which imports a looking with satisfaction in witnessing the frustration of their designs.

The *buttery mouth* and *oily words* describe the insidious character of Absalom, as it is delineated by the historian—2 Sam. xv. and xvi. Still the believer, accustomed to the double edge of the prophetic style in reading this Psalm, notwithstanding its agreement with the occurrences of David's life, will be led to think of David's great descendant, who endured a bitterer agony, and was the victim of a baser treachery, in the same spot where David is supposed to have uttered these complaints."—Horsley.

- 1 GIVE ear to my prayer, O God ;  
And hide not thyself from my supplication.
- 2 Attend unto me, and hear me :  
I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise ;
- 3 Because of the voice of the enemy,  
Because of the oppression of the wicked :  
For they cast iniquity upon me,  
And in wrath they hate me.
- 4 My heart is sore pained within me :  
And the terrors of death are fallen upon me.
- 5 Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me,  
And horror hath overwhelmed me.
- 6 And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove !  
For then would I fly away, and be at rest.
- 7 Lo, then would I wander far off,  
And remain in the wilderness. Selah.
- 8 I would hasten my escape  
From the windy storm and tempest.
- 9 Destroy, O LORD, and divide their tongues :  
For I have seen violence and strife in the city.

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PSALM lv. 2. *I mourn in my complaint ; literally, wander in my complaint or meditation, "give free course to my sorrow"—Hengstenberg ; and make a noise, or am agitated or distracted.*

3. *Hate, or persecute.*

4. *My heart is sore pained, or trembleth.*

9. The first word of this verse seems to connect better with the preceding, which removes the ellipsis in each verse supplied by *and*. The passage would then stand, *I would hasten my escape from the windy storm, from the destroying or devouring tempest. O Lord, divide their tongues, &c.* The latter expression seems to allude to the confusion of the Babel-builders.



- 10 Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof :  
Mischief also and sorrow *are* in the midst of it.
- 11 Wickedness *is* in the midst thereof :  
Deceit and guile depart not from her streets.
- 12 For *it was* not an enemy *that* reproached me ;  
Then I could have borne *it* :  
Neither *was it* he that hated me *that* did magnify *himself*  
against me ;  
Then I would have hid myself from him :
- 13 But *it was* thou, a man mine equal,  
My guide, and mine acquaintance.
- 14 We took sweet counsel together,  
*And* walked unto the house of God in company.
- 15 Let death seize upon them,  
*And* let them go down quick into hell :  
For wickedness *is* in their dwellings, *and* among them.
- 16 As for me, I will call upon God ;  
And the LORD shall save me.
- 17 Evening, and morning, and at noon,  
Will I pray and cry aloud :  
And he shall hear my voice.

10. *They*, "*i.e.*, violence and strife, which are here personified and compared to watchmen parading the city walls."—*Rosenmüller*.

13. *Mine equal*. Ostervald well expresses the sense of the original, "*Que j'estimais un autre moi-même*." *My guide and mine acquaintance, or my intimate and familiar friend*.

14. *We took sweet counsel, or enjoyed confidential intercourse*. *In company* ; the Hebrew signifies in the assembled multitude, not merely in company with each other.

15. The word *quick* is here employed in its primary but now almost obsolete sense of *living*, or *alive*. *Let them, or they shall go down alive into the grave*—that is, be cut off in the vigour of life, or in the height of their prosperity. The Psalmist appears tacitly to allude to the destruction of Korah and his company, which is related in precisely the same terms (Num. xvi. 33) ; "*They went down alive into the pit*;" Hebrew, as here, *Sheol* ; and the sentiment is tantamount to that of verse 23 ; *Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days*.

- 18 He hath delivered my soul in peace  
From the battle *that was* against me :  
For there were many with me.
- 19 God shall hear, and afflict them,  
Even he that abideth of old. Selah.
- Because they have no changes,  
Therefore they fear not God.
- 20 He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace  
with him :  
He hath broken his covenant.
- 21 *The words* of his mouth were smoother than butter,  
But war *was* in his heart :  
His words were softer than oil,  
Yet *were* they drawn swords.
- 22 Cast thy burden upon the Lord,  
And he shall sustain thee :  
He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.
- 23 But thou, O God, shalt bring them down  
Into the pit of destruction :  
Bloody and deceitful men  
Shall not live out half their days ;  
But I will trust in thee.

PSALM LVI.

To the chief Musician upon Jonath-*elem-rechokim*. Michtam [or, or A golden Psalm] of David, when the Philistines took him in Gath.

*Jonath-*elem-rechokim** may be rendered *the solitary dove among strangers* ; but "it seems preferable to consider the words as designating an established tune peculiarly adapted to those Psalms, the object of which, like the present,

18. *For there were many with me* ; rather, *against me*, or *contending with me*. The Psalmist reverts to former deliverances, as an earnest of support in the present emergency ; or the verse may be rendered as a prayer—*Deliver my soul, &c.*

22. "The strong part of the soul speaks to the weak. Compare Psalm xxvii. 14 ; Psalms xlii. and xliii."—*Hengstenberg*.

was to commemorate the exile of persons who, as David, were innocent of the offences imputed to them, and who were yet compelled to seek refuge in a distant country."—*Phillips*. *When the Philistines took him in Gath*—rather, *held him*, or *had him in their power*; for David was not taken captive by the Philistines, but on two occasions fled to them for protection, and afterwards found it difficult to liberate himself. Psalm xxxiv. is referred to the first of these; the present does not specify which. It has been objected against the title, that "in the representation which the Psalm gives of his enemies, one could not recognize the inhabitants of Gath. But who would say that the representation has respect to these alone? The Psalmist has rather, as this lay in the nature of the thing, Saul and his company pre-eminently before his eyes, to whom also belonged what he had to suffer from the people of Gath."—*Hengstenberg*.

- 1 BE merciful unto me, O God :  
For man would swallow me up ;  
He fighting daily oppresseth me.
- 2 Mine enemies would daily swallow me up :  
For they be many that fight against me, O thou Most High.
- 8 What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.
- 4 In God I will praise his word,  
In God I have put my trust ;  
I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.

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PSALM lvi. 1, 2. *Would swallow me up*. The Hebrew signifies *to snort at*, as a wild beast incited by rage, or in eager pursuit of its prey. *O thou Most High*. These words represent only one in the original, which is not elsewhere used as an epithet of the Deity, but signifies *on high, highly, or proudly*, which seems the more correct rendering here. "Many in their pride fight against me."—*Boothroyd*.

3. The combination of fear and trust in this verse, and the determination not to fear in the next, have been supposed to involve an inconsistency. "Fear and hope, indeed, appear to be opposite affections, which cannot dwell in the same bosom; but experience shows that hope first truly gains the ascendant there, where fear holds possession of one part of the heart. For hope is not exercised when the mind is in a quiescent state, but is as it were asleep; then, however, does it begin to put forth its strength, when it elevates the mind dejected by cares, soothes it when disquieted by trouble, sustains and fortifies it when seized with terror."—*Calvin, quoted by Hengstenberg*.

4, 10. *In, rather concerning God, I will praise his word*—i.e., I will praise Him for the fulfilment of his promises; or, as Boothroyd renders, "In God I will glory on account of his word."

- 5 Every day they wrest my words :  
 All their thoughts *are* against me for evil.  
 6 They gather themselves together, they hide themselves,  
 They mark my steps, when they wait for my soul.  
 7 Shall they escape by iniquity ?  
 In *thine* anger cast down the people, O God.  
 8 Thou tellest my wanderings,  
 Put thou my tears into thy bottle :

6. *When they wait for my soul* ; rather, *because they lay wait for my life*.

7. The word rendered *iniquity* signifies also *vanity* ; the line may perhaps stand more correctly, *Let them escape in vain*—i.e., let them not escape.

8. *Put thou my tears into thy bottle*. It may reasonably be doubted whether the Psalmist alludes to the custom supposed by some to have existed among the Greeks and Romans, of putting the tears shed for the death of any person into small phials, and offering them on the tomb of the deceased. There is, in fact, no trace of such a custom in any ancient writing or sculpture of either of those people, its existence being merely a modern conjecture from the phials of pottery, glass, or sometimes precious stone, found in tombs, generally of the Romans, which have consequently acquired the name of lachrymatories, though some suppose them to have been designed to contain the perfumes used in sprinkling the funeral pile. A custom, however, of putting tears into bottles appears to exist in the east at the present day. In the annual lamentations of the Persians for the slaughtered sons of Ali, when their tears are copiously excited by passionate discourses and tragical recitations, they are sometimes collected by a priest on a piece of cotton, pressed into a small bottle, and preserved with the greatest care, being supposed to possess a peculiar virtue, so that persons on the point of death have revived when a drop has been administered to them.—See *Kitto's Illustrated Commentary*. But it is not needful to seek beyond the sphere of ordinary life for an illustration of these, any more than of the succeeding words, which repeat the same idea under the figure of a written record ; and the following commentary of Arndt, while it has the merit of being less far-fetched, is perhaps more to the purpose, especially as the kind of bottle here mentioned is the vessel of skin used by the Hebrews for holding their liquors :—“ It cannot but happen that such persecutions should make weeping eyes, for it is a sad thing to be counted as a sheep for the slaughter, as a curse and offscouring of the whole world. But here lies a powerful consolation, that God gathers up such tears, and puts them into His bottle, just as one would pour precious wine into a flagon, so precious and dear are such tears before God ; and God lays them up as a treasure in the

*Are they not in thy book ?*

9 When I cry unto thee,

Then shall mine enemies turn back.

This I know, for God is for me.

10 In God will I praise *his* word :

In the LORD will I praise *his* word.

11 In God have I put my trust :

I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.

12 Thy vows are upon me, O God :

I will render praises unto thee.

13 For thou hast delivered my soul from death.

*Wilt not thou deliver* my feet from falling,

That I may walk before God in the light of the living ?

#### PSALM LVII.

To the chief Musician. *Al-taschith*, Michtam [*or*, Destroy not, A golden Psalm] of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave.

The words *Al-taschith*, *destroy not*, were not addressed by David to his followers in the cave, but on a subsequent occasion to Abiahai, on his proposing to kill Saul as he lay asleep in his camp—1 Sam. xxvi. 8, 9. David, however, acted no less in the spirit of them in the cave of Engedi when he resisted the entreaties of his men to seize the opportunity now afforded him of destroying his enemy—1 Sam. xxiv. 4, &c. The inscription thus interpreted seems therefore very appropriate to the present Psalm ; but as it is also prefixed to three others, viz., lviii., lix., and lxxv., it must admit

heavens, and if we think such tears are lost, lo ! God hath preserved them for us as a treasure in the heavens, with which we shall be richly consoled in that day.”—*From Hengstenberg’s quotation*. The following observations in *Roberts’s Oriental Illustrations*, tend to confirm the view here taken, that the expression is not derived from any particular custom, while it shows at the same time that a similar phraseology is not uncommon in the east :—“The lachrymatories used in Greece and Rome are, I believe, unknown to the Hindoos. A person in distress, as he weeps, says—‘ Ah, Lord ! take care of these tears ; let them not run in vain.’ ‘ Alas ! my husband, why beat me ? my tears are known to God.’ ”

13. *That I may walk before God—i.e.*, “under His gracious observation. Compare Gen. xvii. 1. *In the light of the living*. The clear daylight, which illuminates the earth—Compare Job xxxiii. 30 ; elsewhere, *in the land of the living*—Psalm xxvii. 13.”—*Hengstenberg*.

of some more general construction. Hengstenberg, who considers it to refer to the subject of the Psalms, remarks: "All in which the expression occurs, rise up to God, amid the vexation which the oppression of the world prepares for the children of the kingdom; in Psalm lxxv. indeed, in the form of praise, behind which however the prayer is concealed. The three successive Psalms in which the *destroy not* occurs, refer to the times of Saul. What can be more natural than the supposition that it was the maxim which David resolved in his heart during precisely that period?" Others suppose the words to designate some musical accompaniment, or to have been the commencement of a song, according to the manner of which the Psalm was to be chanted. "There are two instances recorded of David's taking refuge in a cave; the first in the cave of Adullam, the second in the wilderness of Engedi. The matter of this Psalm agrees very well with his circumstances at Engedi, but not with the narrative of his concealment at Adullam, where he was protected by a considerable force under his own command, and was in no immediate danger of attack from Saul."—*Phillips* ab. "The Psalm contains thoughts appropriate to a cave. In the cave all is darkness, no sun nor moon shines in it; to abide in such a place is for a poor persecuted man the symbol of his whole condition (compare Heb. xi. 38); but amidst the cave-darkness there appears for the righteous a light from the Lord which conducts them to the hope of salvation."—*Hengstenberg*. On the transition which this Psalm exhibits, from prayer in the midst of distress, to the most elevated expressions of thanksgiving and praise, see remarks on Psalm xxviii.

- 1 BE merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me :  
For my soul trusteth in thee :  
Yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge,  
Until *these* calamities be overpast.
- 2 I will cry unto God most high ;  
Unto God that performeth *all things* for me.
- 3 He shall send from heaven, and save me  
*From* the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah.  
God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.

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PSALM lvii. 2. In conformity with the Rabbinical story, that David escaped the notice of Saul in the cave of Engedi by means of a spider's web at the entrance, which led Saul to conclude that the cave was unfrequented, the Chaldee thus paraphrases this verse: "I will cry unto God most high and mighty, who commanded a spider to make in the cave a web for me."

3. *He shall send, &c.* This expression is generally explained as equivalent to, *he shall send or put forth his hand*, but the ellipsis may perhaps be better supplied by *aid or help*. In the next sentence we have the same expression completed: *God shall send forth his mercy and his truth. From the reproach*; it seems better with the old versions and the marginal rendering to construe this as a verb, supplying the copulative conjunction: *and put to reproach him that would swallow me up.*

- 4 My soul is among lions :  
*And I lie even among them that are set on fire,*  
*Even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows,*  
*And their tongue a sharp sword.*
- 5 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens ;  
*Let thy glory be above all the earth.*
- 6 They have prepared a net for my steps ;  
 My soul is bowed down :  
 They have digged a pit before me,  
 Into the midst whereof they are fallen *themselves*. Selah.
- 7 My heart is fixed, O God,  
 My heart is fixed :  
 I will sing and give praise.
- 8 Awake up, my glory ;  
 Awake, psaltery and harp :  
 I *myself* will awake early.
- 9 I will praise thee, O LORD, among the people :  
 I will sing unto thee among the nations.
- 10 For thy mercy is great unto the heavens,  
 And thy truth unto the clouds.
- 11 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens :  
*Let thy glory be above all the earth.*

4. *My soul, i.e., my life or person, is among lions, and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men.* "I lie among men burning with rage."—Boothroyd. The old versions vary both from the present Hebrew and from each other in this verse.

7. *My heart is fixed.* The ancient versions support the marginal rendering—*prepared*, that is, to give thee praise.

8. *My glory, i.e., my soul.*—See on Psalm xvi. 9. *Awake, psaltery and harp.* "The orientals often speak to inanimate objects as if they had intelligence. Thus, a strolling musician, before he begins to play in your presence, *says*, 'Arise, arise! my harp, before this great king! play sweetly in his hearing, and well shalt thou be rewarded.'"—*Roberts's Oriental Illustrations.* *I myself will awake early*; literally, *I will awaken the morning or dawn*; a highly poetical expression, which Milton and others have borrowed. "*Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn.*"—*L'Allegro.* B.C.B.

PSALM LVIII.

To the chief Musician. Al-taschith, Michtam [or, Destroy not, A golden Psalm] of David.

"This Psalm is of similar character and contents to those of the preceding and following, which have respect to David's relations in the Sauline period."—*Hengstenberg*. "It is a strong and bitter invective against iniquitous and precipitate judges; and may have allusion to Saul's hasty condemnation and slaughter of the priests of Nob.—1 Sam. xxii."—*Boothroyd*.

- 1 DO ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation ?  
Do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men ?
- 2 Yea, in heart ye work wickedness ;  
Ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth.
- 3 The wicked are estranged from the womb :  
They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.
- 4 Their poison *is* like the poison of a serpent :  
*They are* like the deaf adder *that* stoppeth her ear ;
- 5 Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers,  
Charming never so wisely.

PSALM LVIII. 1. *Do ye indeed speak righteousness* (or *dispense justice*), *O congregation*. The meaning of the Hebrew word is doubtful. It is rendered by the old translators as a participle, *then* ; by others, *dumb*.—*Is justice indeed dumb ? will ye speak it ?* or, *are ye dumb as regards speaking righteousness ?* but the sense given by our translators—*congregation*, that is, *faction*, or *band of evil counsellors*—seems on the whole preferable, forming a parallel with *sons of men* in the next line.

2. Some critics, considering that *working* is appropriate to the *hand*, not to the *heart*, conjecture that the verbs in this verse have been transposed, but *working in heart* is equivalent to *contriving* or *devising*, and involves no inconsistency. *Ye weigh, &c.*, weigh out or dispense. "Though in their hands they hold the scales of justice, yet in their use of them they were balances of injustice and violence."—*A. Clarke*.

4, 5. "*Adder* or *asp*, Heb., *pethen*, is no doubt the *bæten* of the Arabians, which M. Forakal describes as spotted with black and white, about a foot in length, nearly half-an-inch thick, oviparous, and its bite almost instant death. It is the *aspic* of the ancients, and is so called by the literati of Cyprus, though the common people call it *kouphe*, *deaf*. That serpents might be charmed or rendered harmless was well known to the ancients. Virgil and many others state the fact."—*B.C.B.* For illustrations on the subject of charming serpents see *Dr. A. Clarke, Kitto's Illustrated Commentary, Roberts's Oriental Illustrations, &c.*



- 6 Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth :  
Break out the great teeth of the young lions, O LORD.
- 7 Let them melt away as waters *which* run continually :  
*When* he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be  
as cut in pieces.
- 8 As a snail *which* melteth, let *every one of them* pass away :  
*Like* the untimely birth of a woman,  
*That* they may not see the sun.
- 9 Before your pots can feel the thorns,  
He shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living,  
and in his wrath.
- 10 The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance :

6. From the *teeth of serpents*, with which they inflict a wound on their victim, and inject their poison into it, and which the charmers are accustomed to break, the metaphor changes to those of *lions*. The verb and noun in the second line are not the same as in the former, and the variation may be better preserved by rendering, *Strike out the tusks of the young lions, O Lord!* the large canine teeth with which the animal seizes and tears his prey. The Psalmist prays in this and the following verses, that his enemies, or the wicked, may be deprived of their power of inflicting injury, and their evil designs rendered abortive.

7. *When he bendeth his bow to shoot, &c.* The necessity for supplying the last four words is questionable, for though the preceding verb signifies strictly to tread in order to bend the bow, yet it probably admits also of a sense applicable to the arrow, as aim or direct. When he aimeth his arrows, let them be as cut off, i.e., deprived of points, and so blunted and innocuous.

9. The last clause of this verse appears to refer to the thorns just before mentioned. There is nothing in the original answering to *in his*, and the word rendered *wrath* may signify *ready to burn*, or *dried*, in contradistinction to *living or green*. Thus the verse will stand, *Before your pots feel the thorns, whether green or dry, the whirlwind shall sweep them away.* "Ofentimes it happens to travellers in the deserts, whilst they are engaged in preparing food for themselves, that a tempest suddenly arises and extinguishes the fire kindled for cooking, and disperses and destroys the whole apparatus employed. From this a figure is borrowed for representing the swiftness of the destruction which should come on the wicked" and frustrate their evil designs.—Phillips.

10. *The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance*, "because of the manifestation given in it of the judgment and righteousness of God."—

He shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.

11 So that a man shall say,

Verily *there is* a reward for the righteous :

Verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.

PSALM LIX.

To the chief Musician. Al-taschith, Michtam [or, Destroy not, A golden Psalm] of David ; when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him.

The occasion of this Psalm, according to the title, were the circumstances narrated in 1 Sam. xix.: "Saul, having failed to smite him with a javelin, caused the house of David to be surrounded, with orders to kill him whenever he might come out. David was delivered through the artifice of his wife Michal, but this transaction formed the commencement of his long-continued flight, during which he had to encounter unheard of dangers, and to endure nameless sufferings. According to David's manner, the references to the event in the Psalm itself are very general, and most of the relations belong to the whole Sauline period. Many modern expositors reject the superscription. Those who do so wander hither and thither, and each one excogitates his own hypothesis, and satisfies himself."—*Hengstenberg*. The main objection rests on the use of the word *heathen* in verses 5 and 8, which seems to point to national rather than personal enemies ; but the inference thus drawn from a single expression, and that admitting of an explanation consistent with the title (see on verse 5), is not sufficient to outweigh the evidence afforded by the latter, and by the general tenor of the Psalm. The *Al-taschith* in this instance seems not inappropriate to the escape of David himself from the threatened destruction—see on Psalm lvii. The Psalm is divided by *Selah* into three parts. The first (verses 1-5) contains in general terms a prayer for deliverance from the machinations of unprovoked enemies, who in the second part (6-13) are brought more distinctly into view under the image of rapacious dogs, prowling about after their prey ; but the prayer

*Hengstenberg*. "The washing his footsteps in the blood of the wicked implies victory, and alludes to the practice of pursuing the vanquished over the battle field ; the pursuers necessarily, as it were, dipping their feet in the blood of the slain with which the ground is covered."—*Phillips*. "It is not," remarks Arndt, "to be understood literally, as if the fearers of God must avenge themselves by the shedding of blood, or have pleasure therein, but so that if they entreat vengeance of God, God wonderfully vindicates their cause. When Saul fell upon his sword, sore pressed by the Philistines, that was God's vengeance, and David bathed his feet in the blood of the wicked, and incurred no guilt by Saul's destruction. When Ahab was shot in the battle, so that his blood ran through his chariot and the dogs licked it, that also was God's vengeance, and the prophet Elias bathed his feet in the blood of the wicked."

of faith is matured into a certain conviction of their discomfiture. The third part represents the security enjoyed by the Psalmist under the Divine protection. The description of his enemies at the commencement of the second part, and the succeeding expression of confidence in God's protection, to verse 11, may be termed "the burden of the song," the recurrence of which, but with considerable variety in the amplification, constitutes the concluding part.—See *Jebb*.

- 1 DELIVER me from mine enemies, O my God :  
Defend me from them that rise up against me.
- 2 Deliver me from the workers of iniquity,  
And save me from bloody men.
- 3 For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul,  
The mighty are gathered against me ;  
Not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O LORD.
- 4 They run and prepare themselves without *my* fault :  
Awake to help me, and behold.
- 5 Thou therefore, O LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel,  
Awake to visit all the heathen :  
Be not merciful to any wicked transgressors. Selah.
- 6 They return at evening :  
They make a noise like a dog,  
And go round about the city.
- 7 Behold, they belch out with their mouth :  
Swords are in their lips :

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PSALM lix. 3. *They lie in wait for my soul, or life.* "Compare 1 Sam. xix. 11. : 'And Michal, his wife, said to David, If thou deliver not thy soul this night, to-morrow thou shalt be slain.'"—*Hengstenberg*.

5. *The heathen.* Some suppose Saul and his adherents to be thus designated for their impiety, but there seems no authority for the use of the Hebrew word in this way. In the singular, indeed, it is not unfrequently applied to the Israelites as a nation, or as a company of people; but in the plural, in which form it occurs here, it denotes the nations of the world at large, or the heathen as distinguished from Israel. The import of the present passage appears to be: Thou who judgest all nations wilt not acquit the wicked transgressors, or those who practise treacherous wickedness, among thy professed people. So verse 8 may also be explained, understanding as before the second line.

7. *Who doth hear?* This is generally regarded, as it is by our translators, as said by the wicked: *Who [say they] doth hear and judge us?* but it may be

- For who, *say they*, doth hear ?  
 8 But thou, O LORD, shalt laugh at them ;  
 Thou shalt have all the heathen in derision.  
 9 *Because of his strength* will I wait upon thee :  
 For God *is* my defence.  
 10 The God of my mercy shall prevent me :  
 God shall let me see *my desire* upon mine enemies.  
 11 Slay them not, lest my people forget :  
 Scatter them by thy power ;  
 And bring them down, O LORD our shield.  
 12 *For the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips,*  
 Let them even be taken in their pride :  
 And for cursing and lying *which* they speak.  
 13 Consume *them* in wrath, consume *them*, that they *may*  
 not be :  
 And let them know that God ruleth in Jacob  
 Unto the ends of the earth. Selah.  
 14 And at evening let them return ;  
 And let them make a noise like a dog,  
 And go round about the city.  
 15 Let them wander up and down for meat,  
 And grudge if they be not satisfied.

taken as a complaint of the Psalmist: *Who is there to hear their reproaches, and vindicate my character ?*

9. The reading of the ancient versions, *My strength*, gives the clearer sense,—*O my strength, I will wait upon thee*. If we adhere to the received text, the import of the line appears to be: For a defence from the strength of the enemy I will wait upon thee.

10. *The God of my mercy shall prevent me*, i.e., come to my help.—See on Psalm xxi. 3. *God shall let me see [my desire]*, or *make me to look upon mine enemies*.—See on Psalm liv. 7.

11. *Slay them not*, i.e., immediately. Let the warning to be deduced from their example have its full effect.

14, 15. There seems an incongruity in these verses taken in immediate connection with the preceding, which denounces the *extermination* of the wicked ; but this disappears on viewing them (as above remarked) as commencing another division of the Psalm, by reiterating the character of the

- 16 But I will sing of thy power ;  
 Yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning :  
 For thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my  
 trouble.
- 17 Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing :  
 For God *is* my defence, *and* the God of my mercy.

## PSALM LX.

To the chief Musician upon Shushan-eduth. Michtam [*or*, A golden Psalm] of David, to teach ; when he strove with Aram-naharaim and with Aram-zobah, when Joab returned, and smote of Edom in the valley of Salt twelve thousand.

*Shushan* is the same word, but in the singular form, as *Shushannim*, in the title of Psalm xlv., where see note. *Eduth* ; the two words in the Hebrew may signify literally, *the Lily of Testimony*, and may be the designation of an

Psalmist's enemies already given. The verbs here are in the same form as in verses 6 and 7, and there seems no good reason for not observing a like uniformity in translation : *And at evening they return, or will return, &c., &c.* The substitution of *stay all-night* for *grudge* in verse 15 is not only supported by the ordinary use of the Hebrew verb, but seems requisite to complete the shading of the poetic colouring in connection with evening in the preceding, and morning in the following verse. "The fancy, occupied with images of future prosperity, will dwell with special delight on the morning, and conceive of this as the time of an uninterrupted prosperity," and it "is not uncommonly mentioned in connection with salvation, because it presents an image of that. To the *enemies* the Psalmist assigns the *evening* and the *night*, because their lot is a matter of darkness ; but he himself sings praise to God in the *morning*, because his lot is a morning."—*Hengstenberg*. To appropriate fully the metaphors here employed, we must turn to the usages of the East, where dogs, having no particular masters, are obliged to *wander up and down for meat*, and retaining much of their native habits as beasts of prey, they do this chiefly by night, being in general dozy and inactive during the day. In their night prowlings they effectually clear the streets of whatever offal or carrion may be in them, being in fact the only scavengers ; and their want of squeamish appetites is evinced to an extent that would alone well account for all the abhorrent allusions which the Scriptures contain. They refuse scarcely anything, except crude vegetables, capable of mastication, and yet are for ever lean, hungry, and unsatisfied. Their nightly howlings are truly hideous.—See *Kitto's Illustrated Commentary*, *Burder's Oriental Customs*.

instrument resembling a lily in form, and perhaps devoted to sacred subjects. *To teach* may "point to the national character of the Psalm," and "intimate that it was intended to be taught to the people."—*Hengstenberg*. The narrative to which the title refers is contained in 2 Sam. viii. 3–13, 1 Chron. xviii. 3–12; and Psalm xlv., which presents some striking coincidences of expression with the present, has been supposed to refer to the same events.—See note there. "The sons of Korah," says Hengstenberg, "sang in the midst of misery, probably whilst David was absent at the Euphrates; David followed them after succour had been in some measure obtained." "According to 2 Sam. viii. 12–14, the expedition against Edom followed immediately after the termination of the war with the Syrians. *Aram-naharaim*, i.e., Syria of the two rivers, or Mesopotamia, is not spoken of in the narrative of this war, but only *Aram of Zobah*; we learn, however, from the account of David's second Syrian expedition, that David, when he had to do with Aram of Zobah, had also necessarily to do with the Mesopotamians, inasmuch as the King of Zobah, Hadarezar, whose situation cannot be exactly fixed, but is generally supposed to lie between the Euphrates and the Orontes, towards the N.E. of Damascus, held the kings of Mesopotamia in a sort of vassalage.—See 2 Sam. x. 16, 19."—*Hengstenberg*. The discrepancy in the two accounts with regard to the numbers slain, stated here as 12,000 and in the history 18,000, Yarchi explains by saying, "that Abishai first slew 6,000 and afterwards Joab 12,000 when he returned from smiting Syria, making the total number 18,000."—*Phillips*. This Psalm is divided by *Selah* into two parts, "the first (verses 1–4), elegiac; the second (verses 5–12), triumphant."—*Jebb*. The former has been applied to the intestine commotions in which the country was involved during the latter years of the reign of Saul, and the early ones of that of David, but the language employed seems rather to indicate a sudden and unexpected disaster, and may refer to some defeat experienced previously to the victories recorded in the narratives.—See on Psalm xlv.

- 1 O GOD, thou hast cast us off,  
Thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased;  
Oh turn thyself to us again.
- 2 Thou hast made the earth to tremble;  
Thou hast broken it:  
Heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh.
- 3 Thou hast showed thy people hard things:  
Thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.

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PSALM lx. 2. *Thou hast made the earth [or land], to tremble.* A poetic figure taken from an earthquake, to represent the ravages of war or national convulsions.

3. *The wine of astonishment*; literally, *the wine of reeling, or intoxication*; a figure not unfrequently employed by the prophets to describe the overpowering effects of the Divine judgments. The sense here would not inaptly be expressed in homely English phraseology, *thou hast staggered us*.

- 4 Thou hast given a banner to them that feared thee,  
That it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah.
- 5 That thy beloved may be delivered ;  
Save *with* thy right hand, and hear me.
- 6 God hath spoken in his holiness ;  
I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem,  
And mete out the valley of Succoth.
- 7 Gilead *is* mine, and Manasseh *is* mine ;  
Ephraim *also is* the strength of mine head ;  
Judah *is* my lawgiver ;

4. Some understand the *banner* to denote David himself, as a king given by God, to whom his people look as to a banner or ensign, and follow his leadings ; but it may rather be taken in a more simple and general sense, as descriptive of the Lord's favour and guidance, and the pledge of His truth or faithfulness to His people, and their fidelity to Him. It has been customary with some eastern sovereigns to send to their feudatory princes, with their titles, a banner which was always carried before them while they preserved their allegiance. The delivery of a banner seems also to have involved an obligation on the part of the giver to protect those to whom it was given.—See *Kitto's Illustrated Commentary*. Dr. A. Clarke, in loc. "This verse," remarks Jebb, "forms a note of preparation for moderating into a more joyful key, as if he had said—Shall that banner be displayed in vain ?" to which the rest of the Psalm is responsive—No ! it is the pledge of our deliverance and our triumphs, and rejoicing in the promises of God, I will maintain possession of what He has given me, and even achieve further conquests.—See on Psalm cviii. 6–13.

5. *Thy beloved*. "David means both himself, whose name signifies *beloved*, and the Israelites, to whom God hath shown distinguishing regard."—*Boothroyd*.

6–8. "The Psalmist founds his hope of having his prayer (verse 5) answered, on the Divine promise. The reference is to the general aspect of the assurances given in the Pentateuch, as to the possession of the land of Canaan, in its widest extent, and as to victory over hostile neighbours. As far as regards the first of these, he has particularly in his eye the blessing of Jacob in Gen. xlix. 33 ; and, as regards the latter, the prophecies of Balaam."—*Hengstenberg*. *God hath spoken in his holiness (therefore), I will rejoice*. What follows would be unsuitable considered as directly spoken by God, but the substance of what He has spoken is given, though in an indirect form. "We may gather what it was from the reply, as grounded on it, which is made by the people :—God has given to me

8 Moab is my washpot;  
Over Edom will I cast out my shoe:  
Philistia, triumph thou because of me.

glorious promises, which, as the Holy One, separated from all created and finite beings, and therefore above all deceit and change (compare Num. xxiii. 19) He must fulfil; and, on the ground of them, *I will rejoice, &c.*" The Psalmist names "in succession several particular places, objects, and tribes, which together make up a description of the whole land: Shechem on the one side Jordan, Succoth on the other; in manifest reference to Gen. xxxiii. 17, 18, where Jacob, in returning from Mesopotamia, first settles at Succoth, where he builds a house; and afterwards goes to Shechem, where he builds an altar. The Psalmist sees in that action of Jacob a type and pledge of the occupancy of the land by his posterity." In the succeeding enumeration, Gilead (the portion of Reuben and Gad) and Manasseh designate the eastern or trans-Jordanic district; and Ephraim, formerly the ruling tribe (see on Psalm lxxviii.) and Judah, the present royal tribe, represent the western region of the now consolidated kingdom of David. *Ephraim is the strength of mine head.* Ephraim is signalized both by Jacob and Moses as a powerful and numerous tribe—Gen. xlviii. 19, Deut. xxxiii. 17. *Judah is my lawgiver.* This expression evidently alludes to the blessing of Jacob—Gen. xlix. 10. In verse 8 the Psalmist turns to the dominion of Israel over the neighbouring nations. *Moab is my wash-pot*, or *basin*, is expressive of the state of ignominious bondage to which David reduced the Moabites.—See 2 Sam. viii. 2. The vessel used for washing the feet was a dishonourable vessel. Herodotus relates (b. ii., c. 172) that Amasis, king of Egypt, having set up an image made from a golden foot-bath, thus addressed the people who flocked to adore it:—"This image was formed from a wash-pot which lately we used for the vilest purposes; then we cleaned our feet in it, anon, we reverently worship it. Now it has happened to me as to this vessel; once, indeed, I was one of the people, but now I am your king. Then I enjoin you to honour and regard me." *Over*, or *on Edom will I cast out my shoe.* Keeping in view the idea of washing the feet, the Psalmist compares the subjugation of the Edomites to the condition of a menial, to whom his master casts the shoe which he has pulled off, for the purpose of carrying it away, or cleaning it. Some commentators refer to Deut. xxv. 9, and Ruth iv. 7, neither of which is quite appropriate. In the former, the shoe is taken from its owner in token of degradation, and in the latter, the action of taking it off and giving it to another is symbolical of surrendering a right. A more apposite illustration is afforded by Matt. iii. 11, and the parallel passages, where John the Baptist declares himself unworthy to bear or unloose the shoes of the Messiah—i.e., to per-



- 9 Who will bring me *into* the strong city ?  
 Who will lead me into Edom ?
- 10 Wilt not thou, O God, *which* hadst cast us off ?  
 And *thou*, O God, *which* didst not go out with our armies ?
- 11 Give us help from trouble :  
 For vain *is* the help of man.
- 12 Through God we shall do valiantly :  
 For he *it is that* shall tread down our enemies.

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form the lowest office for Him. *Philistia, triumph thou because of me.* In Psalm cviii. 9, *Over Philistia will I triumph.* The variation in the Hebrew is much less than appears in our version, consisting solely in the person of the verb. The preposition which in both places commences the line, and will admit of various significations, may be construed simply as such, or as including the personal particle *me*, in which case it may be rendered as in the present Psalm, *Because of me*, or *for me*, *Philistia triumph*, or *shout*—i.e., acknowledge me thy conqueror; or, as in the margin, *Over me triumph*! speaking ironically. But it seems better to take it as in Psalm cviii., simply as the preposition in connection with Philistia: *Over Philistia triumph*, or *raise the shout of triumph*—the Psalmist addressing the people. So the Chaldee paraphrases—“Over Philistia shout, O congregation of Israel.” The rest of the old versions read both Psalms the same; the Syriac, “Over Philistia I will shout;” Septuagint and others, “The Philistines are made subject to me,” which is no doubt the sense intended.

9. *Who will bring me into the strong city?* The next line indicates that a city of the Edomites is intended, most probably *Selah*, their capital, which is mentioned in 2 Kings xiv. 7, in connection with the *valley of Salt*, and was probably contiguous to it. Its name in Hebrew, *Selah*, and in Greek *Petra*—i.e., *the rock*, and the ruins of its former greatness which the researches of recent travellers have brought to light, strikingly verify the Psalmist's epithet of *the strong city*.—See *Keith on the Prophecies*, or *Kitto's Biblical Cyclopædia*.

10. The difference in this verse as it stands here, and in Psalm cviii., is only in translation. It may more properly be rendered without any supplementary words:—

- Didst not thou, O God, cast us off ?  
 And wentest not forth, O God, with our hosts, (or, armies),  
 Or, But wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts ?

Thus reiterating the plaintive strain of verse 1 of the present Psalm, but indicating a hope of its reversal, which is more fully expressed in the concluding verse.

PSALM LXI.

To the chief Musician upon Neginah. *A Psalm of David.*

Some suppose that this Psalm was composed when David was driven by Absalom's rebellion beyond Jordan, and from the sanctuary of God. On Neginah, see Psalm iv.

- 1 HEAR my cry, O God ;  
Attend unto my prayer.
- 2 From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee,  
When my heart is overwhelmed :  
Lead me to the rock *that* is higher than I.
- 3 For thou hast been a shelter for me,  
And a strong tower from the enemy.
- 4 I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever :  
I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.
- 5 For thou, O God, hast heard my vows :  
Thou hast given *me* the heritage of those that fear thy name.
- 6 Thou wilt prolong the king's life :  
And his years as many generations.

PSALM lxi. 2. *From the end of the earth, &c.* "I believe thou art omnipresent, and canst and wilt hear prayer from whatever place it be offered. Therefore if I be even at the end of the earth I will call upon thee when my heart is greatly oppressed, for I know that thou alone canst succour me."—*Phillips.* The words, however, may be rendered *from the extremity of the land*, and, on the supposition stated above, would thus describe literally David's position at the time of uttering them, and the subsequent verses his confident hope of returning to the tabernacle and to his kingdom, corresponding with Psalm xlii. 2, 6, which is considered to have been composed on the same occasion. *Lead me to the rock which is higher than I.* A place of refuge and security, but above my power to attain without thy help.

6. Literally, *Thou wilt add days to the days of the king, his years as generation and generation.* Though David, as we read in 1 Chron. xxix. 28, "died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour," yet these words in their full import must refer to the perpetuity of his kingdom or posterity, and especially in the person of the Messiah. So the Targum paraphrases them—"Days upon days wilt thou add to the King Messiah ; his years as the generations of this world, and the generations of the world to come."

- 7 He shall abide before God for ever :  
 Oh prepare mercy and truth, *which* may preserve him.  
 8 So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever,  
 That I may daily perform my vows.

## PSALM LXII.

To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun. A Psalm of David.

*Jeduthun* is mentioned (1 Chron. xvi. 41, xxv. 1,) as one of those appointed by David to praise God with instruments of music; also in title of Psalm xxxix., where see note: but the Hebrew preposition affixed to the word here, and in Psalm lxxvii. *upon*, not to *Jeduthun*, seems rather to indicate some instrument named after, and probably invented by him. "This Psalm is one altogether of thanksgiving; there is no prayer. The subject is confidence in the Divine protection. Its construction is most regular, consisting of three parts, marked by *Selah*. In each part there is an address to men, in each a reference to the justice and mercy of God. The poem opens with the expression of confidence in God, 'the burden of the song': and the second part repeats the like sentiment, but, as usual, in a higher strain, and the Psalmist is urged by his personal experience of the Divine presence to invite the people to share in his happy feelings."—*Jebb*. "In the third strophe, he first rejects all other objects of confidence, and then turns in conclusion towards God, as the only steadfast ground of hope."—*Hengstenberg*.

- 1 TRULY my soul waiteth upon God :  
 From him *cometh* my salvation.  
 2 He only is my rock and my salvation ;  
*He* is my defence ; I shall not be greatly moved.  
 3 How long will ye imagine mischief against a man ?  
 Ye shall be slain all of you :  
 As a bowing wall *shall ye be*, and as a tottering fence.

7. O, *prepare*, &c.; more correctly, *order*, or *appoint* that mercy and truth may preserve him.

PSALM lxii. 1. *Truly*, &c.; rather, *only upon God my soul waiteth*, or *reposeth*. The same particle occurs six times in the course of the Psalm, and is rendered *only*, except in this and the ninth verse. "This frequent repetition is sufficient to point it out as the soul of the Psalm. *Only* in God does my soul find rest, because He *only* is my helper, when mine enemies are *only* considering how they may destroy me."—*Hengstenberg*. And all confidence in man, or trust in riches, whether lawfully or unlawfully acquired, is *only* vanity.

3. *Ye shall be slain*, &c. The verb may be more suitably rendered, *Ye shall be shattered in pieces*, or *destroyed*, connecting with what follows with-

- 4 They only consult to cast *him* down from his excellency :  
They delight in lies ;  
They bless with their mouth,  
But they curse inwardly. Selah.
- 5 My soul, wait thou only upon God ;  
For my expectation *is* from him.
- 6 He only *is* my rock and my salvation :  
*He is* my defence ; I shall not be moved.
- 7 In God *is* my salvation and my glory :  
The rock of my strength, *and* my refuge, *is* in God.
- 8 Trust in him at all times ; ye people,  
Pour out your heart before him ;  
God *is* a refuge for us. Selah.
- 9 Surely men of low degree *are* vanity,  
*And* men of high degree *are* a lie :  
To be laid in the balance,  
They *are* altogether *lighter* than vanity.
- 10 Trust not in oppression,  
And become not vain in robbery :  
If riches increase, set not your heart *upon them*.

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out supplying the words *shall ye be* ; but it seems more in harmony with the context to construe it (as is done by all the old and some modern translators), in the *active* sense.

How long will ye plot against or assail a man ?  
Will ye shatter him in pieces, all of you,  
As a bowing wall, a tottering fence ?

That is, Will ye combine to take advantage of his weakened condition to effect his utter ruin ?

4. *They only consult to cast down from his excellency*—"the man spoken of in verse 3. If this Psalm were composed with any reference to the Absalomic insurrection, the whole passage would suit very well the case of Absalom and Ahithophel, and their companions, who consulted how they could expel David from his throne, and so deprive him of his royal dignity."  
—*Phillips*.

9. *Surely, &c.* ; rather, *men of low degree are only vanity*, see on verse 1.

- 11 God hath spoken once ;  
 Twice have I heard this ;  
 That power *belongeth* unto God.  
 12 Also unto thee, O LORD, *belongeth* mercy :  
 For thou renderest to every man according to his work.

## PSALM LXIII.

A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.

According to the title, David composed this Psalm when he was in the wilderness of Judah, or, as several of the old versions read, *the wilderness of Idumea*. The wilderness of Judah comprehended the eastern region of the portion allotted to that tribe, stretching along the whole of the western shore of the Dead Sea, and bordering southward on the land of Edom ; whence it might also be called, perhaps in an extended sense, the wilderness of Idumea. David took refuge, during the Sauline persecution, in various parts of that district (1 Sam. xxii. 5 ; xxiii. 14, 15, 24, 25 ;) and there also he tarried on his flight from Absalom, before crossing the Jordan—2 Sam. xv. 23 ; xvii. 16.

11. Dr. A. Clarke remarks—" Except some of the ancient versions, almost every translation and commentary has missed the sense and meaning of this verse, of which the true version is this :—*Once hath God spoken, these two things have I heard*. Now what are the two things he had heard ? 1st. *That strength is the Lord's—i.e., He is the origin of power*. 2nd. *And to thee, Lord, is mercy—i.e., He is the fountain of mercy*. These, then, are the two grand truths that the law, yea, that the whole revelation of God, declares through every page." The grammatical construction, however, and a like form of expression in Job xxxiii. 14, and xl. 5, seem decisive in favour of the common translation. *Once* conveys sometimes the idea of *immutable* or *irrevocable*, as Psalm lxxxix. 35 ; and *once and twice* is a Hebraism for several or many times. " Pointing to the warning contained in verses 9 and 10, and at the same time laying the basis of the exhortation of verse 8, the Psalmist says that God is mighty in opposition to everything of an earthly character, and intimates that this is a truth which God had again and again impressed deeply upon his heart. To this word of God he adds a second, which seems to supplement it. Next to *power*, according to which God, and God alone, can help, He has *kindness* or *love*, according to which He will help. These two positions form the strong pillars on which the confidence of the righteous depends."—*Hengstenberg*. *For thou renderest, &c.* Some translate the particle *though*, or *yet*, which is more suitable to what *immediately* precedes ; but in reference to the two preceding positions conjointly, *for* is quite appropriate. In God's judgment of men, His power and mercy are both exemplified.

As David, in verse 11, styles himself king, a title which, though anointed by Samuel, he does not appear to have assumed during Saul's lifetime, the Psalm must be referred to the latter occasion, unless we understand the words in verse 11 as explained in B.C.B.—“David shall come to the kingdom, according to the promise of God.” This, however, seems a strained interpretation; and the allusion to the sanctuary, in verse 2, accords better with the latter period, when David had deposited the ark in the tabernacle of Mount Zion, and instituted there the various services appertaining to the public worship. There is also a striking coincidence of expression which tends to confirm this view; the word *thirsty*, or, as in the margin, *weary*, in verse 1, occurring three times in the narrative of David's flight from Absalom, where it is said that Ziba brought wine “for such as were *faint* (same word in the Hebrew) in the wilderness,” and that the king and the people came weary and refreshed themselves (2 Sam. xvi. 2, 14); and again, on arriving at Mahanaim, Shobi and others brought refreshments, because the people were hungry, and thirsty, and weary in the wilderness—xvii. 29.

- 1 O GOD, thou *art* my God ;  
Early will I seek thee :  
My soul thirsteth for thee,  
My flesh longeth for thee,  
In a dry and thirsty land, where no water is ;
- 2 To see thy power and thy glory,  
So *as* I have seen thee in the sanctuary.
- 3 Because thy lovingkindness *is* better than life ;  
My lips shall praise thee.
- 4 Thus will I bless thee while I live :  
I will lift up my hands in thy name,
- 5 My soul shall be satisfied *as with* marrow and fatness ;  
And my mouth shall praise *thee* with joyful lips :
- 6 When I remember thee upon my bed,  
*And* meditate on thee in the *night* watches.
- 7 Because thou hast been my help,  
Therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.
- 8 My soul followeth hard after thee :  
Thy right hand upholdeth me.
- 9 But those *that* seek my soul, to destroy it,  
Shall go into the lower parts of the earth.

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PSALM lxiii. 1. *My flesh*—i.e., *my body*, in connection with *soul* preceding, —*my whole person*.

9. The phrase, *seek my soul*, or *life*, comprehends the idea of destruction,

- 10 They shall fall by the sword :  
 They shall be a portion for foxes.  
 11 But the king shall rejoice in God ;  
 Every one that sweareth by him shall glory :  
 But the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.

## PSALM LXIV.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

This Psalm is ascribed by the title to David, and bears considerable resemblance to those composed by him during the Sauline period, yet with rather less of an *individual* character. Its "fundamental thought is that the completion of the wickedness and cunning of the enemies is no ground for despair, but rather for joyous hope; the nearer they are to gaining their end, the nearer are they to destruction. To those who have to contend with such wickedness the Psalmist calls, *Lift up your hearts.*"—Hengstenberg.

without the addition found here. The line may be rendered—*They shall be destroyed that seek my soul*; or, as the Septuagint and Vulgate read, with the omission of one letter, "In vain they seek my soul. They shall go into the lower parts of the earth," the grave, or regions of the dead; perhaps alluding to the fate of Dathan and Abiram.

10. *Foxes.* The *jackal*, "a peculiar kind of fox, which feeds on dead men, and digs them out of their graves in order to devour them. Hence men slain in battle, whose bodies are either left unburied, or buried at large in a field, may be said to be a portion for such animals."—Phillips.

11. *Every one that sweareth by him.* "To swear by God is to acknowledge Him as such; to express faith in Him, and therefore to serve Him as such."—Phillips. This involves the idea of truth in opposition to those *who utter falsehood*, or acknowledge false gods, in the next line. Some expound it—*Those who swear by the king*; who maintain their loyalty against the rebels; *who speak lies*, and calumniate him; referring in support of this view to Gen. xlii. 15, 16; 1 Sam. xvii. 55; 2 Sam. xi. 11; xv. 21. But though Joseph, when disguising himself from his brethren under the character of an Egyptian courtier, swore by the life of Pharaoh, it does not appear that an oath by the king was sanctioned or used by the Israelites; the asseveration, *as thou livest*, or *as thy soul liveth*, which, in the instances cited, is addressed to the king, being also employed indiscriminately by one person in making a solemn assertion to another, as by Hannah to Eli, 1 Sam. i. 26; by David to Jonathan, xx. 3; by Abigail to David (not then king), xxv. 26; by Elisha to Elijah, 2 Kings ii. 2, 4, 6. It is equivalent to—*What I say is as true as that thou art alive*, and is usually preceded by, *As the Lord liveth*.

- 1 HEAR my voice, O God, in my prayer :  
Preserve my life from fear of the enemy.
- 2 Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked ;  
From the insurrection of the workers of iniquity.
- 3 Who whet their tongue like a sword,  
And bend their bows to shoot their arrows, *even bitter words* :
- 4 That they may shoot in secret at the perfect :  
Suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.
- 5 They encourage themselves in an evil matter :  
They commune of laying snares privily ;  
They say, Who shall see them ?
- 6 They search out iniquities ;  
They accomplish a diligent search :  
Both the inward *thought* of every one of *them*, and the  
heart, is deep.

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PSALM lxiv. 1. *My prayer* ; rather, *complaint*. Hear my voice when I pour forth my sorrow or troubles.

3. *And bend, &c.* ; “rather, omitting the words in italics, *aim their arrows*. The verb here implies doing all that was necessary to shoot.”—*Boothroyd*. *Bitter words* ; *bitter* may here have the sense of *envenomed*,—see on Psalm lviii. 7, in allusion to poisoned arrows. So Luther, “Who sharpen their tongue as a sword ; They aim their venomous words as arrows.”

4. *And fear not*. The Syriac version, and some Hebrew MSS., omitting a letter, read *and are not seen*, which forms a more exact parallel with *in secret*, in the previous line.

5. *Who shall see them*—i.e., the *snares*, which they have so artfully concealed, so as to escape them.

6. There is some obscurity in the original text, which has occasioned no small diversity of interpretation, though more as regards the form of words than the general scope of the passage. “We are consumed by that which they have thoroughly searched.”—*Marg.* “They have searched out iniquity, and they have failed, or exhausted themselves, searching diligently. A man shall approach, and the heart is deep.”—*Sept. and Vulgate*. “Thai ransaked wickednesses, thai failled ransak, and in ransaking.”—*Old Psalter* in Dr. A. Clarke’s possession. “They search out iniquities ; they fathom whatever can be fathomed, even the inward part of man, and the deepest heart :”—*French and Italian versions*—that is, as some explain it, having with all their malicious artifice failed to detect anything, in word or deed, whereby to criminate the upright man, they arrogate to themselves the power of penetrating into his



- 7 But God shall shoot at them *with* an arrow ;  
Suddenly shall they be wounded.
- 8 So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves ;  
All that see them shall flee away.
- 9 And all men shall fear,  
And shall declare the work of God ;  
For they shall wisely consider of his doing.
- 10 The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust in him ;  
And all the upright in heart shall glory.

## PSALM LXV.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm and Song of David.

On *Psalm and Song*, in this and the three following titles, see Psalm xlviii. It has been a prevailing opinion that David composed this Psalm on return of plenty after the three years' famine recorded in 2 Sam. xxi. Bishop Horsley and others suppose it was designed for a national thanksgiving on gathering in the fruits of the earth, to be used at the passover, or at the feast of tabernacles. Whether it may or may not have been occasioned by any particular event, or designed for any special season, it can never be deemed out of season, embracing as it does a vast and comprehensive theme, the praise of God for His many blessings, spiritual and temporal, which it celebrates, especially in the latter part, in a strain of poetic imagery of sur-

secret thoughts, impugning his motives, or accusing him of inward wickedness. — See *Rosenmüller*. Most expositors, however, take the *searching* in the sense of inventing or plotting evil, which seems more in harmony with the context. "They devise wicked deeds; we have accomplished the devised project." — *Gesenius*. "They ymagin wickednesses, and kepe it secret among themselves, every man in the depe of his heart." — *Coverdale*. "They search out how to do wrong; they put in practice fully that they have diligently searched out, yea, even the secret and bottom of every one of their hearts." — *Bishops' Bible*. Boothroyd's version is very good—"They search out iniquitous counsels: By diligent search they perfect them: And deep is the heart and mind of every one."

8. *They shall make their own tongue, &c.* The reproach they cast upon another shall fall back upon themselves. *All that see them shall flee away.* "Shall be struck with dismay." — *Horsley*.

9. Luther's version gives the sense rather more clearly, though not so literally—"And all men who shall see it shall say that God hath done it, and mark that it is his work."

passing beauty. In verses 6 and 7 the Deity is spoken of in the third person, instead of being addressed in the first, as in the preceding and following verses. The Psalm was probably chanted in alternate chorus, verses 6 and 7 forming the first, and 12 and 13 the second response.

- 1 PRAISE waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion :  
And unto thee shall the vow be performed.
- 2 O thou that hearest prayer,

PSALM LXV. 1. *Praise waiteth* (marg., *is silent*) *for thee, O God, in Zion* "Ainsworth—'Prayse silent wayteth for thee, O God.' The people of the east are much given to meditation and silent praise, and sometimes they may be seen for hours so completely absorbed as to be insensible to all surrounding objects."—*Roberts*. Luther and others render, "Thou art praised in silence, O God, in Zion;" and this sense is vindicated in a dissertation, *De Cultu Dei in Silentio ad Psalmum lxx. 2 illustrandum*; Leipsic, 1756, by J. J. Boss; who "thinks the words refer to the sacred silence which was observed by many ancient nations in the worship of their gods, especially among the Egyptians, Indians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans, as he shows by many testimonies of ancient authors. And that such a sacred silence obtained among the Jews also he infers from the statement of the Talmud and Maimonides, that when the priest burnt incense in the sanctuary, at the time of offering the daily sacrifices, there reigned a deep silence. For at the instant that the priest entered into the sanctuary, a bell was rung as a signal that now was the time of prayer, at the sound of which all the priests who were in the temple retired, and every man composed himself to prayers, which were poured forth in silence to God. At that time every noise must cease, the slaying of animals, the crash of axes, loud voices, conversations, and other sounds of that kind." Rosenmüller, from whom I have translated the above, adds that the sense of calm expectation or trust appears more weighty and elegant than a mere allusion to any particular custom. "*Silence—praise*; praise which has silence for its consequences, or has the effect of allaying that tumultuous agitation which prevails in the soul till it has attained to a living knowledge of the glory of God."—*Hengstenberg*. The word in question is a noun, from a root signifying to be silent, quiet, or motionless; to rest, repose, or wait in tranquil confidence—See Psalm xxxvii. 7; lxii. 1-5. Some, as above, understand it here as qualifying *praise*, or in apposition with it, supplying *and*. "Trust and songs of praise appertain to thee."—*Gesenius*. Others, with our translators, as expressing the relation of praise to God. "Praise becometh thee."—*Septuagint*. "Upon thee, O God, praise resteth; literally, is the repose of praise."—*Horsley*. "Praise waiteth on thee, as a servant whose duty it is to do as thou commandest."—*Boothroyd*.

2. *Unto thee shall all flesh come*. All are dependent upon God, and "every necessity, every want is, though an unconscious, yet a real coming to Him,

- Unto thee shall all flesh come.
- 8 Iniquities prevail against me :  
*As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.*
- 4 Blessed is the man whom thou choosest,  
 And causest to approach unto thee,  
*That he may dwell in thy courts :*  
 We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house,  
*Even of thy holy temple.*
- 5 By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us,  
 O God of our salvation ;  
*Who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth,*  
*And of them that are afar off upon the sea :*
- 6 Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains ;  
*Being girded with power :*
- 7 Which stilleth the noise of the seas,  
 The noise of their waves,  
 And the tumult of the people.

who is the only helper. Compare Psalm civ. 27, where all the *beasts wait upon God, that He may give them their meat in due season* ; Job xxxviii. 41, where the *ravens cry to God* ; and Gen. xxi. 17, where God hears Ishmael, not when he is in prayer, but when he is crying. Thus, in verse 5, God is called the confidence of all the ends of the earth, in reference to what He actually is in Himself, not in reference to His being acknowledged as such."—Hengstenberg.

3. This verse may be rendered more clearly, *Iniquities have prevailed over me* or (as Septuagint and Vulgate read) *us* ; *but thou forgivest (literally coverest) our transgressions.*

5. *Terrible, or wondrous things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, or impart unto us.* The miracles wrought for the Israelites of old, to which the Psalmist probably alludes (compare Deut. x. 21), were calculated to fill the minds of their enemies with terror, and their own with admiring reverence. Both these ideas are embraced in the Hebrew root, as in our own word *fear*, see verse 8. *Them that are afar off upon the sea* ; literally, *the sea of them that are afar off*—i.e., as the Targum explains, *the islands of the sea, distant from the extremities of the continent designated as the ends of the earth.*

7. *And the tumult of the people, or, as the tumult of the people.* "Thus we have a beautiful simile ; God, as the sovereign of nature, stilleth the raging waves with more ease than a powerful king suppresses a popular tumult."—Boothroyd.

8 They also that dwell in the uttermost parts  
Are afraid at thy tokens.

Thou makest the outgoings of the morning  
And evening to rejoice.

9 Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it :  
Thou greatly enrichest it  
With the river of God, *which* is full of water :  
Thou preparest them corn;  
When thou hast so provided for it.

10 Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly :  
Thou settlest the furrows thereof :  
Thou makest it soft with showers :  
Thou blessest the springing thereof.

11 Thou crownest the year with thy goodness ;  
And thy paths drop fatness.

8. *The tokens of God* appear, from what follows, to be such as are adapted to inspire the mind with reverence rather than terror. *The outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.* "The rising and setting sun, the morning and evening twilight, the invariable succession of day and night, are all ordained by Thee, and contribute to the happiness and continuance of man and beast."—*B.C.B.* By *the outgoings of the morning and evening* some understand the inhabitants of the east and west, as a parallel to *those that dwell in the uttermost parts*. This idea may be comprised in the beautiful and comprehensive language of the text, but not to the exclusion of those suggested above.

9. *And waterest it* ; marginal, *after thou hadst made it to desire rain.* *The river of God, which is full of water* ; an elegant and highly poetic metaphor, designating the vast repository of moisture retained by the clouds, to be distilled in fertilizing showers upon the earth. *Thou preparest*—*hast provided.* The Hebrew is the same in both places ; literally, *Thou preparest their* (i.e., the people's, see Psalm iv. 7) *corn, for so, or thus, thou preparest it* ; viz., as described in the next verse.

11. *Thou crownest, &c.* The Hebrew is, *Thou crownest the year of thy goodness*,—through the whole of which Thy goodness extends.—Compare Deut. xi. 12. "The rolling year is full of thee." "The crown which God puts upon the year of His goodness (compare Psalm ciii. 4) is composed of the instances of that goodness"—*Hengstenberg* ; or the crowning may refer to the bringing to maturity of the productions of nature. "The herbs, fruits, and flowers, produced by the earth, are as a beautifully variegated crown

- 12 They drop *upon* the pastures of the wilderness :  
And the little hills rejoice on every side.  
13 The pastures are clothed with flocks ;  
The valleys also are covered over with corn ;  
They shout for joy, they also sing.

## PSALM LXVI.

To the chief Musician. A Song or Psalm.

We have no record of the writer or occasion of this Psalm. It may have been composed as a national thanksgiving for some deliverance, of which the release from Egyptian bondage is made the type, or simply as a commemoration of the circumstances attending that great event. Many refer it to the Babylonish captivity ; but there seems but little in its language which accords with this view. See Hengstenberg's remarks. It is divided by *Selah* into four strophes, which are alternate, the third answering to the first, and the fourth to the second : the first and second thus forming one principal division, and the third and fourth another, parallel with it, but more amplified and more individual in its relations. In the first strophe, (verses 1-4), the world at large is summoned to celebrate the greatness and majesty of God ; and in the second (verses 5-7), to *come* and witness His wonderful works. In the third, the note of praise with which the first had opened is resumed, but with a more special application to the people of Israel and the Psalmist individually—verses 8-15. The fourth, like the

set upon her head by the great Creator ; and every year is thus crowned by His bounty."—*B.C.B.* And *thy paths drop fatness*. "God is represented as a beneficent Lord, distributing blessings wherever He goes. *Paths* denote God's operations in nature, giving rain in due season, and the returns of spring, seed-time, and harvest."—*Boothroyd*. The primary meaning of the word is the track of a waggon or chariot wheel, and the expression may allude to the clouds, which God is said to make His chariot.—Psalm civ. 3.

12. *They (thy paths) drop upon the pastures of the wilderness*. There is nothing in the original answering to *upon*, and the line may be rendered without it : *The pastures of the wilderness drop—i.e., the pastures themselves, moistened with rain and dew, distil fertility*. The district called the Wilderness of Judea (see on Psalm lxxiii., title), though mountainous and woody, and thinly inhabited, abounded with fertile spots adapted for pasturage. The literal version of the next line, though highly metaphorical, is so beautiful and expressive, that its banishment to the margin is to be regretted : *The hills are girt, or gird themselves with joy*.

13. *They shout, &c.* "People, in passing fields or gardens after a fine rain, say—Ah ! how these fields and trees are laughing to-day ! Yes, you may well laugh ; this is a fine time for you !" —*Robert's Oriental Illustrations*.

second, opens with the invitation *come*, but it is here addressed to those *who fear God*, to whom the Psalmist declares his own experience of His goodness, and closes the whole with a verse of praise.—Verses 16–20.

- 1 MAKE a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands :
- 2 Sing forth the honour of his name :  
Make his praise glorious.
- 3 Say unto God, How terrible *art thou in thy works* !  
Through the greatness of thy power  
Shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee.
- 4 All the earth shall worship thee,  
And shall sing unto thee ;  
They shall sing to thy name. Selah.
- 5 Come and see the works of God :  
*He is terrible in his doing toward the children of men.*
- 6 He turned the sea into dry land :  
They went through the flood on foot :  
There did we rejoice in him.
- 7 He ruleth by his power for ever ;  
His eyes behold the nations :  
Let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah.
- 8 Oh bless our God, ye people,  
And make the voice of his praise to be heard :
- 9 Which holdeth our soul in life,  
And suffereth not our feet to be moved.

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PSALM LXVI. 2. *Make his praise glorious* ; literally, *make glory his praise*, or *make his praise a glory*. In the former the sense will be, *make His glory the theme of your praise* ; and in the latter, let your praising God be an object of great glory.

3. *Shall thine enemies submit themselves*. The Hebrew root signifies *to lie*, *flatter*, or *feign submission*. Of such feigned or forced submission Pharaoh was a striking example. On *terrible*, in this and verse 5, see on verse 5 of preceding Psalm.

6. *There did we rejoice in him*. “As descended from those who came out of Egypt, the Psalmist speaks of himself and the present race of Israel as sharers in the joy of that deliverance.”—*Boothroyd*.

9. *Which holdeth our soul in life*. Hebrew, *in lives*, or *among the living*—i.e., who preserveth us alive. See on Psalm xvi. 10.

- 10 For thou, O God, hast proved us :  
Thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.
- 11 Thou broughtest us into the net ;  
Thou laidst affliction upon our loins.
- 12 Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads ;  
We went through fire and through water :  
But thou broughtest us out into a wealthy *place*.
- 13 I will go into thy house with burnt offerings :  
I will pay thee my vows,
- 14 Which my lips have uttered,  
And my mouth hath spoken,  
When I was in trouble.
- 15 I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings,  
With the incense of rams ;  
I will offer bullocks with goats. *Selah*.
- 16 Come and hear, all ye that fear God,  
And I will declare what he hath done for my soul.
- 17 I cried unto him with my mouth,  
And he was extolled with my tongue.
- 18 If I regard iniquity in my heart,  
The LORD will not hear *me* :
- 19 But verily God hath heard *me* ;  
He hath attended to the voice of my prayer.
- 20 Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer,  
Nor his mercy from me.

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11. *Affliction*; literally, a hard burden. "We have been as a man entangled in a snare, with a heavy load on his back, who has no power to extricate himself."—Boothroyd.

12. A *wealthy place*; literally, a well watered, or abundant place. "A rich land."—Boothroyd. Thou hast restored us to liberty and happiness.

15. *The incense of rams*, remarks Boothroyd, is absurd; and so in the usual sense of the word it would be, but the Hebrew root furnishes also that of *smoke*, or *burning*, which is quite appropriate; or it may denote the *fat*, the part frequently selected for burning. Some disconnect the two words, and Boothroyd renders, "Of rams, together with incense," referring to Lev. ii. 1, 2, 15. But it appears from that and the adjoining chapters that incense was an accompaniment of farinaceous offerings, not of animal sacrifices.

PSALM LXVII.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth. A Psalm or Song.

This Psalm has been supposed, not improbably, to have been composed on the removal of the ark to Mount Zion, when David, after offering sacrifices, blessed the people in the name of the Lord of Hosts—2 Sam. vi. 18. "Every expression," remarks Hengstenberg, "of the power and grace of God awakens in Israel the hope that the unnatural relation in which the heathen stood towards Him would in future cease to exist;" and the institution of His public worship at Jerusalem would be a fitting occasion to pray for the extension of His kingdom throughout the world. This, however, still remains to be accomplished, and the Psalm is expounded by the Fathers and Christian commentators generally as prophetic of the triumphs of the Gospel. The *Selah* marks three divisions; the first (verse 1), being a prologue nearly in the form of blessing prescribed to Moses and Aaron (Num. vi. 24, 25), of which the second and third are each an amplification. The changes of person may be accounted for as in other cases (see on Psalm lxx.), by its having been designed to be chanted in responses, perhaps in such a mode as suggested by Horsley, viz. :—

First Voice or Semi-chorus. Second Voice or Semi-chorus. Joint or Full Chorus.

Verse 1

Verse 2

Verse 3

" 4

" 6

" 5

" 7

- 1 GOD be merciful unto us, and bless us ;  
And cause his face to shine upon us. *Selah*.
- 2 That thy way may be known upon earth,  
Thy saving health among all nations.
- 3 Let the people praise thee, O God ;  
Let all the people praise thee.
- 4 Oh let the nations be glad and sing for joy :  
For thou shalt judge the people righteously,  
And govern the nations upon earth. *Selah*.
- 5 Let the people praise thee, O God ;  
Let all the people praise thee.
- 6 Then shall the earth yield her increase ;  
And God, *even* our own God, shall bless us.

PSALM lxxvii. 2. *Thy saving health.* The Hebrew is simply *thy salvation*.

6. *Then* is not in the Hebrew, and the verb is in the past tense : *The earth hath yielded her increase*. So all the old versions. Blessings already received are judged as an earnest of the future. Jerome's comment on this verse is an instance of the extravagance to which the Fathers sometimes carried their expositions. *The earth is the Virgin, her increase—Christ, miraculously produced from her.*



7 God shall bless us ;  
And all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

# PSALM LXVIII.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm or Song of David.

This Psalm opens with the solemn invocation pronounced by Moses, when the ark set forward on the journeyings of the Israelites in the wilderness, and is considered to have been composed by David either on the removal of the ark from Kirjath-jearim to the house of Obed-edom, or from thence to Mount Zion ; or on a subsequent occasion, when the ark had been carried into the field of battle, as was the case in the war with Rabbah (2 Sam. xi. 11), and was brought back in triumphal procession to the sanctuary. The allusion to Mount Zion, (verse 16), appears decisive in favour of the second supposition rather than the first, but the pervading tone of triumph, more particularly in verses 18-23, accords better with the last. In unison with the interpretation of verse 18 in the Epistle to the Ephesians, the Psalm is generally regarded as typical and prophetic of the spiritual victories of Christ, and the prevalence and extension of His kingdom. This Psalm is considered by translators and expositors the most difficult in the whole Psalter. De Muis, whose words are adopted by Adam Clarke, says :—"There are in it as many precipices and labyrinths as there are verses or words. It may not improperly be termed the torture of critics, and the reproach of commentators." This, however, is a very exaggerated statement ; a more correct one is presented in the following remarks of Amyrald :—"There are in it poetic descriptions and bold metaphors, frequent apostrophes, magnificent prosopoposias, and words which are of rare occurrence and well selected, and therefore not easily understood. It has also others which are quite easy ; it has doctrines sufficiently well explained to be understood, and expressed in ordinary language." The Psalm consists of four main divisions, marked by *Selah*, which however occupies an unusual position, being placed not at the close of each, but after the following verse, thus carrying on the sense to the next division. "The first division celebrates the glory and provident mercy of God,—verses 1-6. The exordium finished, God's terrible presence described, the action begins in the second part. The scene of the desert is opened upon our view, and all the thunders and lightnings, and wonders of Divine power and mercy ; the Divine manifestation at Sinai, the rain of manna, the miraculous flow of waters, the discomfiture of mighty hosts by supernatural aid from above, the march of the hosts of heaven, God's triumph over all enemies, His bestowal of salvation ; all this being typical of His future triumph over His spiritual enemies, the gifts purchased for His Church by Christ, the manna of the Holy Spirit, the living waters, and eternal salvation—verses 7-18. The whole forms an accumulation of glorious images such as has never been collected within the same compass. The third division speaks of the future conquests and deliverance of the Israelites, and the establishment of God's worship in Jerusalem, typical of the subjugation of the world to Christ, and of the worship of His Church—verses 19-31. The concluding division is like the exordium, ascribing glory to God in somewhat the same terms."—*Jebb*. The various subjects embraced in the Psalm form nine minor parts or strophes of nearly equal

length, as marked in the text, which were probably sung by different choirs. The exordium consists of two strophes of three verses each. The denunciation against the enemies of God in verse 1 is amplified in verse 2, and verse 3 presents in glorious contrast the joy of the righteous. Verses 4–6 are an exhortation to praise God as the helper of the afflicted and miserable, individualized under the character of orphans and widows, solitary and prisoners.

- ¶<sub>1</sub>    1 LET God arise, let his enemies be scattered :  
           Let them also that hate him flee before him.
- 2 As smoke is driven away, so drive *them* away :  
           As wax melteth before the fire,  
           So let the wicked perish at the presence of God.
- 3 But let the righteous be glad ;  
           Let them rejoice before God :  
           Yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.
- ¶<sub>2</sub>    4    Sing unto God, sing praises to his name :  
           Extol him that rideth upon the heavens  
           By his name JAH,  
           And rejoice before him.
- 5 A father of the fatherless,  
           And a judge of the widows,  
           Is God in his holy habitation.
- 6 God setteth the solitary in families :  
           He bringeth out those which are bound with chains :  
           But the rebellious dwell in a dry *land*.

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PSALM lxxviii. 4. *Extol him that rideth upon the heavens.* This rendering harmonizes with verse 33, and other passages where the Deity is said to ride upon the heavens or clouds ; but there seems no good authority for assigning that meaning to the word used here, which in all other places where it occurs signifies a *plain* or *desert*. Symmachus, Jerome, Bishop Lowth, Merrick, and others, render—"Prepare the way for him who rideth through the deserts"—i.e., who rode through the wilderness on the cherubim, alluding to the passage of the ark, which is preferable. *By his name JAH, or whose name is JAH.* "Jah is an abbreviation of Jehovah, and signifies self-existence. He who derives His being from none, but gives being to all."—*B.C.B.*

6. *God setteth the solitary in families ;* or, more literally, *maketh the solitary to dwell in a house.* "The solitary are those destitute of human help. The immediate blessing of which these stand in need is to be brought under root

- ¶ 7 O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people,  
 When thou didst march through the wilderness ; Selah :  
 8 The earth shook, the heavens also dropped  
 At the presence of God :  
*Even Sinai itself was moved*  
 At the presence of God, the God of Israel.  
 9 Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain,  
 Whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance,  
 When it was weary.  
 10 Thy congregation hath dwelt therein :  
 Thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor.

and shelter.”—Hengstenberg. *He bringeth out those which are bound with chains.* There seems no good authority for this rendering ; it should rather be, *He bringeth out those who are bound to prosperity or liberty*, thus forming an exact parallel with the preceding line, and contrasting with the *dry land*, the lot of the rebellious, in the next line. This, and perhaps the previous verse, may allude to the deliverance of the Israelites from their outcast and enslaved condition in Egypt, and the detention of the rebellious generation in the wilderness, thus introducing the full subjects of the exodus and the conquest of Canaan, which are the topics of the two succeeding strophes,—verses 7–10 and 11–14. These, and all that follow, consist of four verses each, with the addition of an intercalary one, the doxology (verse 19), which forms the transition between the principal divisions in the action of the poem.

7, 8. These verses are taken, with slight variations, from the song of Deborah.—Judg. v. 4, 5.

9, 10. Verse 9 is generally considered to refer to the quails ; but the expression, *shower of liberalities* (*plentiful rain*), admits of a more comprehensive interpretation, embracing, as Hengstenberg remarks, the whole “provision made by God for His people in temporal matters during their marchings through the wilderness ; the manna, the quails, the water out of the rock, &c.” This view is supported by Psalm lxxviii. 24, 27, where the word *rained* is applied both to the manna and the quails. Whether the latter are specially referred to in verse 10 is more questionable ; and the sense of *congregation*, or *host*, seems on the whole better supported than that of *living creatures*, given in the Septuagint and Vulgate. With this rendering, however, the word *therein* cannot refer to *inheritance* in verse 9, which there denotes the *people*, not their *abode*, and the phrase would thus be tantamount to—*thy host dwelt in itself* ; but it must be referred to some word understood in the sense of *desert land*, where God supplied His people’s wants.

- ¶ 11 The LORD gave the word :  
Great was the company of those that published it.  
12 Kings of armies did flee apace :  
And she that tarried at home divided the spoil.  
18 Though ye have lien among the pots,  
Yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver,  
And her feathers with yellow gold.

11—14. These verses "contain what God did for His people, from their entrance into the land of promise till the setting up of the sanctuary in Zion; He gave them glorious victory, and happy peace"—Hengstenberg.

11. *The Lord gave the word*, the command to fight, and the promise or song of victory. *Great was the company of those that published it.* The Hebrew word is feminine; *The women who published it were a numerous host.* It was customary for choirs of women to go out to meet the victorious army, and celebrate their achievements. See Ex. xv. 20; Judg. xi. 34; 1 Sam. xviii. 6. In the Messianic interpretation of the Psalm, this passage is applied to the women who announced to the disciples the victory of Christ over death, on the morning of His resurrection.

12. This verse notices the division of the spoil among the women who *tarried at home*, intimating its abundance, and the completeness of the victory.

13. The various meanings which have been assigned by translators to the word here rendered *pots*, show the difficulty, or rather impossibility, of determining its precise signification—viz., *furnaces, fire ranges, or rows of stones* on which pots were set to boil; *cinders, brick-kilns, crooks, canals, watering troughs, sheep-folds, stalls for cattle, ledges, ridges of hills, boundaries, armies.* If it is designed to represent a *depressed* condition, we may adopt the explanation of Parkhurst, who supposes the passage to refer to the place of rest allotted to the vilest slaves; as Homer describes Laertes grieving for the loss of his son, as sleeping where the slaves did, in ashes by the side of the fire—Odyssey, book 11, l. 189, 190. Any such idea, however, seems out of place in the note of triumph of which this strophe consists, nor is it supported by any of the ancient versions, or by the use elsewhere of what appears to be essentially the same word, though slightly varied in form. The preferable rendering appears to be—

When ye lie between the ridges of hills (or, within your own boundaries),  
Ye are as the wings of a dove, covered with silver,  
And her feathers with yellow gold.

Or, as the Hebrew more properly signifies, *greenish gold*. *Yellow gold* is not a dove or pigeon colour; but *silver*, and an iridescent green tinge with a golden hue, may aptly describe the brilliant plumage of some of that beautiful tribe. Some critics suppose the allusion is to the figure of a dove

- 14 When the Almighty scattered kings in it,  
It was *white* as snow in Salmon.  
¶ 15 The hill of God *is as* the hill of Bashan ;  
An high hill *as* the hill of Bashan.

worked in embroidery as a standard, and perhaps taken by the Hebrews from the enemy ; but there is no need for this conjecture. The dove spreading her wings and displaying her plumage in the rays of the sun may be regarded as beautifully figurative, either of the hosts of Israel reposing amid the hills after the toils of warfare, and adorned with the spoils of conquest ; or, of their splendid condition when peacefully settled in their allotted boundaries.

14. This verse presents no less difficulty than the preceding. The word *Salmon* is generally considered a proper name, but some take it as an appellative, denoting obscurity or gloom. So Boothroyd renders the verse :—

“ The Almighty having scattered those kings,  
Hath by this turned death-shade to splendour.”

It differs, however, from that which in other places signifies *the shadow of death*, in the change of a radical letter, essential to justify that sense ; and as in the only other passage where this same word occurs it is clearly the name of a wooded mountain in Samaria (Judg. ix. 48, there spelt by our translators *Zalmon*), there seems no good ground for assigning it a different meaning here. Still there is room for various explanations of the idea intended to be conveyed by this verse. The following seem most deserving of consideration. *When the Almighty scattered kings in it* (the land), *there was snow on Salmon* ; i.e., when the kings of Canaan were routed before the Israelites, they had no place of refuge ; the highest mountains, where alone they might have found safety, being rendered inaccessible by snow ; or, as others understand it, so great was the number of the slain that the ground was whitened with their bones like snow on Salmon. But the most satisfactory exposition seems to be that founded on the idea familiar in the phraseology of the east, of whiteness, as emblematic of joy and prosperity. When the Almighty scattered the kings of Canaan in the days of Joshua, or the invaders and oppressors of Israel in the times of the Judges and Saul, “ the light of prosperity illuminated the darkness of the land, as dark Salmon becomes white when covered with snow.”—*Hengstenberg*.

15–18. The next strophe celebrates the glory of Mount Zion, and the triumphal return of the ark thither. In verses 15, 16, the Psalmist announces the superiority of Zion, as the hill which God had chosen to dwell in over all the other mountains of the land ; of which Bashan, distinguished for its natural excellence, its loftiness and fertility, its stately oaks and

- 16 Why leap ye, ye high hills ?  
*This is the hill which God desireth to dwell in ;*  
 Yea, the LORD will dwell *in it* for ever.
- 17 The chariots of God *are* twenty thousand,  
*Even* thousands of angels :  
 The LORD *is* among them, *as in* Sinai,  
 In the holy *place*.
- 18 Thou hast ascended on high,  
 Thou hast led captivity captive :

fine cattle, is selected as the representative. The name of God is not unfrequently employed to express a superlative or natural excellence ; thus, omitting the word *as*, twice used by our translators, verse 15 simply expresses the eminence of Bashan, which, with its compeers, is, in verse 16, personified as looking askance or with jealous eye at the superior dignity conferred on Zion.

15 A (not *the*) hill of God is the hill of Bashan !

A high peaked hill is the hill of Bashan.

16 Why will ye be envious, ye high peaked hills ?

This is the hill which God desireth to dwell in ;

Yea, Jehovah will dwell in it for ever.

Zion is not named in the text ; but as the carrying of the ark to that place was the burden of the poem, and the procession may now be supposed to have arrived there, the allusion would be sufficiently obvious.

17. "The main strength of the hostile armies, particularly the Syrian, in the war which" (as Hengstenberg supposes) "had just been brought to a termination (comp. 2 Sam. viii. 4, x. 18), lay in *war chariots*." "As expressing emphatically the thought that the God who dwells on Zion is infinitely superior to those hosts, the Psalmist represents Him as surrounded by such a number as no human king ever possessed of invisible chariots, led on by His hosts of angels."—*Hengstenberg*. The Hebrew word here rendered *angels* occurs nowhere else, and its meaning is not determined. The Septuagint and Vulgate have *happy* or *prosperous ones* ; but the sense usually assigned it is most probably the correct one, viz., *repetitions, thousands repeated*, expressive of a countless multitude. Still the idea of angels as the attendants of God must be included in the imagery. That they were so at the giving of the Law on Sinai was a prevailing opinion of the Jews, as appears from Acts vii. 53, Gal. iii. 19, Heb. ii. 2. The other clause of this verse, *The Lord is among them in the holy place* (or *sanctuary*), *as at Sinai*, seems to import that Mount Zion is now invested with as great dignity by the presence and glory of God as Sinai had formerly been.

18. *Thou hast led captivity captive*. This phrase has been supposed to

Thou hast received gifts for men ;  
 Yea, *for* the rebellious also,  
 That the LORD God might dwell *among them*.

¶ 19 Blessed *be* the LORD,  
 Who daily loadeth us *with benefits*,  
 Even the God of our salvation. Selah.

signify taking captive those who had made others captive. It is, however, a Hebraistic and emphatic mode of expression, denoting simply the leading away of a number of captives after victory, as is proved by its use in other places, —see Judg. v. 12, also Num. xxi. 1, Deut. xxi. 10, 2 Chron. xxviii. 17, in all which the original is the same as here. *Thou hast received gifts for men*; literally, *among men*, i.e., the spoils and tribute of the vanquished which Thou givest to Thy people. *Yea, for the rebellious also, &c.*, for those who though formerly rebellious now acknowledge the Divine government. “The ascending of God, which corresponds to *Return thou on high* in the remarkably similar passage, Psalm vii. 7, presupposes His *descending*.”—Hengstenberg. Having descended from heaven to the help of His people, subdued their enemies and enriched them with the spoils, *He ascends on high* amidst the myriads of the heavenly hosts; all which is symbolized by the ark carried into the camp, and now brought back in triumphal procession to its sanctuary on the heights of Zion. For the spiritual or Messianic interpretation we may turn to the fourth chapter of Ephesians, where the Apostle applies this passage to the ascension of Christ, after vanquishing the powers of death, and to the gifts of the Holy Spirit bestowed by Him on the members of His Church.

19. This verse, as already remarked, forms a connecting link between the preceding and succeeding subjects. The words *with benefits*, as the italics show, are supplied by the translators. The preceding verb usually signifies *to lay a burden on one*, and some understand it so here. *Though he may load us with affliction* (for our iniquities); or, *though men may lay burdens upon us*—yet he is the God of our salvation. But the word seems fairly to admit of the sense assigned it by most translators, of laying under a weight of obligation, which is more in harmony with the context. The ancient versions give nearly the same result, though apparently obtained by a rather different process: the Septuagint and Vulgate, “The God of our salvation will prosper our way,” as if deriving the idea from loading a beast of burden for a journey. That of the Syriac, “Who hath chosen us for his inheritance,” is not so obvious.

20–23. In the sixth strophe, “the general thought is expanded, that God is the help of His people against the wickedness of the world, to which the Psalmist had risen in the connecting words of verse 19.”—Hengstenberg.

- ¶ 20 *He that is our God is the God of salvation ;*  
*And unto God the LORD belong the issues from death.*
- 21 *But God shall wound the head of his enemies,*  
*And the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his*  
*trespasses.*
- 22 *The LORD said, I will bring again from Bashan,*  
*I will bring my people again from the depths of the sea :*
- 23 *That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies,*  
*And the tongue of thy dogs in the same.*
- ¶ 24 *They have seen thy goings, O God ;*  
*Even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary.*
- 25 *The singers went before,*  
*The players on instruments followed after ;*  
*Among them were the damsels playing with timbrels.*
- 26 *Bless ye God in the congregations,*  
*Even the LORD, from the fountain of Israel.*

20. *And unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.* The Hebrew is not *from*, but *to*, or *of death*. This line appears to be antithetical to the preceding ; the one asserting that God is the salvation of the righteous, the other, that to Him also belongs the destruction of the wicked. This would connect better with the next verse, by rendering the initial particle *yea* instead of *but*.

22. *I will bring my people, &c.* The last two words are not in the Hebrew, and the context indicates that the object to be supplied is the enemies just mentioned. Though they have fled to *Bashan*, the eastern extremity of the land, or are about to hide themselves in *the depths of the sea*, on the west, yet they shall not escape. Amos ix. 2, 3, presents a striking parallel in support of this view.

24—27. The next strophe describes the order and pomp of the procession.

25. *Among them ;* rather, *in the midst of them ;* i.e., between the singers and the players on instruments were the damsels playing with timbrels. These frequently formed part of the public processions, and Roberts notices that the same order is observed in the festal and religious processions of the Hindoos in the present day. See note on verse 11.

26. Boothroyd's mode of rendering seems more in accordance with the context. *In companies* (bands or choirs) *they bless God, the Lord from the fountain of Israel ;* i.e., they who are of the race or progeny of Israel bless the Lord.



27 There is little Benjamin *with* their ruler,  
 The princes of Judah *and* their council,  
 The princes of Zebulun, *and* the princes of Naphtali.

¶ 28 Thy God hath commanded thy strength :  
 Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.

27. Omitting the words inserted by the translators in the first and second lines, which appear to injure the sense, this verse will read—

There is little Benjamin, their ruler ;  
 The princes of Judah, their council, (or, leaders ;)  
 The princes of Zebulun, the princes of Naphtali.

The tribes of Benjamin and Judah, (though the former is termed *little*, in allusion either to the smallness of their numbers, or to their progenitor as Jacob's youngest son), appear to be dignified with precedence in the procession, and with the titles of *ruler* and *council*, or leaders of the people, as having given to the nation its first judges and its first and second king, the latter the ancestor of its royal line. Zebulun and Naphtali, as we find from the song of Deborah (Judg. v. 18), were distinguished for their valour. These circumstances, together with the geographical location of those four tribes on the south and north, render the naming of them appropriate as representatives of the whole. The same tribes also occupy a prominent place in the propagation of the gospel. The twelve disciples of Christ, Himself "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," were of Judah or Galilee, the district formerly of Zebulun and Naphtali, (Matt. iv. 13); and the great apostle of the Gentiles, who, notwithstanding, designates himself "less than the least," was of the tribe of Benjamin.—Phil. iii. 5.

28–31. In the eighth strophe the Psalmist founds, on a view of the glorious things which God has already done for His people, a prediction of, or prayer for (as the verbs may all be rendered in the imperative mood) the acknowledgment of His sovereignty by the surrounding nations.

28. *Thy God hath commanded thy strength.* All the ancient versions and some Hebrew MSS. by a change of one letter read, *Command, O God, thy strength*, which is more exactly parallel with the next line.

30, 31. In verse 30 there is considerable obscurity. The marginal reading of the first line, *beasts of the reeds*, is that generally adopted, and appears preferable to that of the text. The next two lines are variously interpreted. Boothroyd's version of them is, "The assembly of the mighty, the Lord of nations, Who tread on tiles of silver;" alluding, he considers, to the expensive luxury which prevailed in the palaces of Oriental kings, whose very floors were paved with silver. Others suppose the bulls and calves denote the idols of Egypt, and the next line, dancing in honour of them to the sound of pieces of metal affixed to timbrels. So Merrick's metrical version :—

- 29 Because of thy temple at Jerusalem  
Shall kings bring presents unto thee.
- 30 Rebuke the company of spearmen,  
The multitude of the bulls,  
With the calves of the people,  
*Till every one submit himself with pieces of silver :*  
Scatter thou the people *that* delight in war:
- 31 Princes shall come out of Egypt ;  
Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.
- ¶ 32 Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth ;  
Oh sing praises unto the LORD ; Selah :
- 33 To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, *which were*  
of old ;

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"The beast that from his reedy bed,  
On Nile's proud bank uplifts his head,  
Rebuke and check the impious band,  
Who lift to idol gods the hand :  
From whom the heifer and the steer,  
The offered vow unconscious hear ;  
While to the silver's tinkling sound,  
Their feet in solemn dance rebound."

But the plurality of bulls and calves expressed in the text, even admitting that *the multitude* may refer to their worshippers, hardly comports with the Egyptian custom of carefully selecting for their god one individual of that species, distinguished by certain marks; those terms are more probably employed in the sense assigned them by Boothroyd; or rather as denoting rulers and common people, or generals and soldiers; and on the whole the best supported version of the following line seems to be that of *submitting with, or hastening to bring*, as offerings to the temple, *pieces of silver*. Thus, as is more fully expressed in verse 31, "Egypt and Ethiopia, the most hostile to Israel, and the most established in idolatry, should go to Jerusalem and present their gifts and oblations to the one true God."—*Phillips*. The gospel was at an early period embraced in those countries. "There was a glorious church at Alexandria, where the holy Athanasius was bishop. The treasurer of the Queen of Ethiopia was converted at Jerusalem, and many miracles were performed in that country by the apostles themselves."—*Arndt*.

32—35. In the concluding strophe, all the kingdoms of the earth are exhorted to praise the God of Israel. Thus the beginning, middle (verse 19), and end of this extraordinary and majestic ode is praise to God.

Lo, he doth send out his voice,  
And that a mighty voice.

84 Ascribe ye strength unto God :

His excellency *is* over Israel,  
And his strength *is* in the clouds.

85 O God, *thou art* terrible out of thy holy places :

The God of Israel *is* he that giveth strength and power unto  
*his* people.  
Blessed *be* God.

### PSALM LXIX.

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim. *A Psalm* of David.

Upon *Shoshannim*—see Psalm xlv. “The title intimates that this Psalm was composed by David. A very weighty argument in favour of this assertion may be drawn from the fact that his name is inscribed on the titles of all the Psalms which are nearly related in thought and language to this, and that too in such a manner as to demand the assumption of the identity of the author, as they all bear the character of originality—see Psalms vi. xxii. xxxi. xxxv. xxxviii. xl. The arguments against David are not of such weight as to counterbalance this strong evidence. Much stress has been laid on the reference to the captivity in verses 33–36. Even though there were really such a reference in these verses it would be necessary to set it aside by ascribing this portion to a later author; for the temple or tabernacle is spoken of in verse 9 as still standing. But these verses contain nothing more than a general expression of hope of salvation for Israel, and of the removal of all troubles, such as those of which David saw so much in the days of Saul and Absalom, during which period it is probable that this Psalm was composed. There is no one Psalm, except the twenty-second, which in the New Testament is so frequently quoted and applied to Christ, not only by the apostles, but also by Himself. Many expositors have hence been induced to adopt a direct Messianic exposition. But these quotations by no means justify such an exposition, inasmuch as the Psalm, even though it refer to the righteous suffering man, is still a prophecy of Christ, in whom the idea of was righteousness personified, and in whose case the intimate connection between righteousness and the opposition of sinners was exemplified in living reality—compare on Psalm xxii. A very decided argument against the direct Messianic view is furnished by the confessions of sin, which are thus either lost sight of or are made to refer to imputed sin. The various features scattered throughout the other Psalms above referred to are here brought together into one great martyr image; distinguished by its copiousness in the description of just judgments upon the enemies, designed to serve as a strong bulwark to the righteous man against despair in view of their wickedness, by which in the end they only draw upon their own guilty heads the terrible vengeance of God; and by the strong prominence given to the circumstance that the sufferer suffers for the sake of God, extending to all placed in similar circumstances a strong support on which they may rest their hope of deliverance.”—*Hengstenberg* ab.

- 1 SAVE me, O God ;  
For the waters are come in unto *my* soul.
- 2 I sink in deep mire, where *there* is no standing :  
I am come into deep waters,  
Where the floods overflow me.
- 3 I am weary of my crying : my throat is dried :  
Mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.
- 4 They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs  
of mine head :  
They that would destroy me, *being* mine enemies wrongfully,  
are mighty :  
Then I restored *that* which I took not away.
- 5 O God, thou knowest my foolishness ;  
And my sins are not hid from thee.
- 6 Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of hosts,  
Be ashamed for my sake :  
Let not those that seek thee  
Be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel.
- 7 Because for thy sake I have borne reproach ;  
Shame hath covered my face.

PSALM lxix. 1. *The waters are come in unto my soul.* "A metaphor taken from a person drowning, whose life is nearly gone."—Boothroyd.

4. Horsley, retaining the Hebrew order of the words, renders: "More than the hairs of my head are they that hate me without a cause. More numerous than my locks are they that without provocation are mine enemies." The exact parallel in the construction of the two lines in the original indicates that the word in the second occupying the position of *the hairs of mine head* in the former, is a noun answering to it in sense; but its precise meaning is uncertain: the Syriac version has *my bones*. *Then I restored* (or, *shall I then restore*) *that which I took not away*. This, strictly speaking, is impossible; but it appears to be a proverbial expression, signifying to become accountable for the crimes of others. This was verified in the person of Christ, who was condemned by false witnesses, and suffered "the just for the unjust."

5. *Thou knowest my foolishness.* The mode of expression in the original is peculiar: *Thou knowest as to my foolishness, &c.*; i.e., whether I am guilty or innocent.

- 8 I am become a stranger unto my brethren,  
And an alien unto my mother's children.
- 9 For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up ;  
And the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen  
upon me.
- 10 When I wept, *and chastened* my soul with fasting,  
That was to my reproach.
- 11 I made sackcloth also my garment ;  
And I became a proverb to them.
- 12 They that sit in the gate speak against me ;  
And I *was* the song of the drunkards.
- 18 But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O LORD,  
*In an acceptable time :*

8. "In the East, where polygamy prevails, the husband is a stern and unfeeling despot, his harem a group of trembling slaves ; and the children, while they regard their common father with indifference or terror, cling to their own mother with the fondest affection, as the only parent in whom they feel an interest. Hence it aggravated the affliction of David that he had become *an alien to his mother's children*, the enmity of the other children of his father, the children of his father's other wives, gave him less concern."—*B.C.B.*

9. *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up*, or, *consumed me* ; i.e., "by its inward intensity, it wears me away ; as Luther says, 'I am zealous almost to death ;' and in accordance with John ii. 17. It is clear from Isaiah i. 11, and following verses, what we are to understand by zeal for the house of the Lord, the temple, as the centre of the whole Israelitish religion. Samuel was zealous for the house of the Lord, when he said to Saul, 'Behold obedience is better than sacrifice.' David himself displayed this zeal when he inculcated the utter uselessness of merely outward observances, and of the whole of mere outward worship, and when he cried out *procul profani* to all hypocrites."—*Hengstenberg*. "His reverence and love for God's house are very strikingly exhibited in this passage ; and they were remembered by the disciples of One greater than the Psalmist, when they beheld their Master with a like zeal for maintaining the sanctity of the temple, casting out those who had defiled it with their merchandize and abominations."—*Phillips*.

10. This verse may be rendered more forcibly without the word supplied by our translators : *When I wept away my soul [or life] with fasting ; i.e., suffered my frame to waste away by fasting and weeping.*

- O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me,  
In the truth of thy salvation.
- 14 Deliver me out of the mire,  
And let me not sink :  
Let me be deliverod from them that hate me,  
And out of the deep waters.
- 15 Let not the waterflood overflow me,  
Neither let the deep swallow me up,  
And let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.
- 16 Hear me, O LORD ;  
For thy lovingkindness is good :  
Turn unto me,  
According to the multitude of thy tender mercies.
- 17 And hide not thy face from thy servant ;  
For I am in trouble ;  
Hear me speedily.
- 18 Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it :  
Deliver me because of mine enemies.
- 19 Thou hast known my reproach,  
And my shame, and my dishonour :  
Mine adversaries are all before thee.
- 20 Reproach hath broken my heart ;  
And I am full of heaviness :  
And I looked for some to take pity, but there was none ;  
And for comforters, but I found none.
- 21 They gave me also gall for my meat ;  
And in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

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21. *Gall*. The Hebrew word is not that employed to denote *gall* in the proper sense (the bile) ; but our translators have followed the Seventy in rendering it here and in other passages. Its precise meaning is not ascertained ; but it appears to be the name of some plant noted for its bitter and probably noxious qualities, and hence used as a general term expressive of extreme bitterness. "Bochart, from a comparison of this passage with John xix. 29, thinks that *rosh* is the same herb as the evangelist calls *ῥοσῶκος*, *hyssop* ; a species of which, growing in Judea, he proves from Isaac Ben Orman, an Arabian writer, to be so bitter as not to be eatable."—*B.C.B.* It has been objected that *vinegar* in the next line cannot be what

- 22 Let their table become a snare before them :  
And *that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.*
- 23 Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not ;  
And make their loins continually to shake.
- 24 Pour out thine indignation upon them,  
And let thy wrathful anger take hold of them.
- 25 Let their habitation be desolate ;  
And let none dwell in their tents.
- 26 For they persecute *him* whom thou hast smitten ;  
And they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded.
- 27 Add iniquity unto their iniquity ;  
And let them not come into thy righteousness.
- 28 Let them be blotted out of the book of the living,  
And not be written with the righteous.

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the Psalmist intended, being adapted to quench thirst ; but though a moderate injection of acid renders a beverage more conducive, and agreeably so, to this end, mere vinegar would be a loathsome means of effecting it.

22. There is some ambiguity in the second clause, which is rendered by the Seventy, as quoted Rom. xi. 9, "and a recompense and a stumbling block;" but our common version seems preferable, and accords better with the structure of the whole paragraph (v. 22-28), of which each verse consists of two parallel lines, embodying distinct propositions.

26. *They talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded, i.e.,* by insults and reproaches ; but the old versions read, *they add to the grief, &c.,* which is perhaps the more correct rendering, and gives to the line a more general sense. They add affliction to affliction, instead of administering comfort and relief.

27. *Add iniquity, &c.,* literally, *give iniquity, i.e.,* as some understand it, give them the punishment of their iniquity ; but the sense appears rather to be, "Let them advance from one degree of wickedness to another, till they become ripe for signal punishment. This permission is given by God's withdrawing His grace, and surrendering the sinner to the dominion of his own desires. It was in this way that He allowed Pharaoh's heart to continue hard, notwithstanding the many tokens of Divine displeasure which the Egyptian king experienced ; and this is no uncommon mode by which God, in conducting His moral government, punishes those who go on obstinately in their sin."—*Phillips.*

28. A register appears to have been kept of the Jewish people from which

- 29 But I *am* poor and sorrowful :  
 Let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high.
- 30 I will praise the name of God with a song,  
 And will magnify him with thanksgiving.
- 31 *This* also shall please the LORD better than an ox  
 Or bullock that hath horns and hoofs.
- 32 The humble shall see *this*, and be glad :  
 And your heart shall live that seek God.
- 33 For the LORD heareth the poor,  
 And despiseth not his prisoners.
- 34 Let the heaven and earth praise him,  
 The seas, and every thing that moveth therein.
- 35 For God will save Zion,  
 And will build the cities of Judah :  
 That they may dwell there, and have it in possession.
- 36 The seed also of his servants shall inherit it :  
 And they that love his name shall dwell therein.

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the names of those who died were erased.—See Is. iv. 3 ; Ezek. xiii. 9. “To be blotted out of the book of life, of which mention is first made in Ex. xxxii. 32, is to be devoted to death, with reference to the early and sudden death threatened to the wicked in the law. The book refers here to *temporal*, but in the New Testament to *eternal* life.—Phil. iv. 3, Rev. xx. 15.”—Hengstenberg. To be written with the righteous is the converse. “That, in reference to this paragraph (v. 22–28), we cannot entertain the idea of a zeal which belongs to the Old and not to the New Testament, is obvious, apart from general considerations, from the fact that the Saviour in His last moments emphatically referred to the Psalm, the peculiar character of which is unquestionably taken from this paragraph ; that in Matt. xxiii. 38, He quoted the twenty-fifth verse as descriptive of the desolation which was to come upon Judah ; that the same verse is quoted by Peter as fulfilled in Judas, Judah’s type ; and that Paul in Rom. xi. 9, 10, finds in verses 22, 23, a prophecy of the fate of the Jews.”—Hengstenberg.

31, The *or* inserted by the translators injures the sense and deranges the structure of the verse, which consists of two parallel lines, the second being an amplified description of the ox, marking it as a perfect animal, and in every respect fit for sacrifice :—

This also shall be more pleasing to the Lord than an ox,  
 A bullock full horned and hoofed.



## PSALM LXX.

To the chief Musician. *A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance.*

"This Psalm is almost word for word the same as the last five verses of Psalm xl., and it is written as a part of the succeeding Psalm in about twenty-seven MSS. Both Psalms evidently appear to have been written by David during the rebellion of Absalom, and probably at the crisis when he heard of the sanguinary counsel Ahithophel had given respecting him; or, as some suppose, when beyond Jordan.—2 Sam. xvii. 1-21."—*B.C.B.* The absence of a title to Psalm lxxi., and the appropriateness of that of Psalm 70 to 71, in which the Psalmist commemorates the goodness of God to him all the days of his life, favour the supposition that they were designed to form one Psalm, or rather a pair; for the former, though elsewhere constituting only a portion of another, is complete in itself; and the latter has no abruptness in its commencement, the first three verses being indeed nearly the same as those of Psalm xxxi. These two Psalms are closely allied to Psalm lxix., and also to Psalms xxii., xxxv., xxxviii., and cxl., with which Psalm lxxi. presents several verbal coincidences.

- 1 *MAKE haste*, O God, to deliver me ;  
Make haste to help me, O LORD.
- 2 Let them be ashamed and confounded  
That seek after my soul :  
Let them be turned backward, and put to confusion,  
That desire my hurt.
- 3 Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame  
That say, Aha ! aha !
- 4 Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee :  
And let such as love thy salvation say continually,  
Let God be magnified.
- 5 But I *am* poor and needy :  
Make haste unto me, O God :  
Thou *art* my help and my deliverer ;  
O LORD, make no tarrying.

## PSALM LXXI.

"The particular aspect of the general subject embraced by the Psalm is the opening of the fountains of consolation for the suffering righteous man in his old age. The Psalmist teaches him how to be patient in tribulation, and joyful in hope, by contemplating that grace of God which he has already

PSALM lxx. 3. *Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame; rather, by reason of their shame;* or, *Let them bring back (or receive) shame for their reward, who say, &c.*—See notes on Psalms xl. 15, xxxv. 21.

enjoyed; and how to drive away the bitterness of his pain by the love of God, as he dwells with his whole soul upon the recollection of those deeds which are like so many pledges of fresh deliverance."—*Hengstenberg*.

- 1 IN thee, O LORD, do I put my trust :  
Let me never be put to confusion.
- 2 Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape :  
Incline thine ear unto me, and save me.
- 3 Be thou my strong habitation,  
Whereunto I may continually resort :  
Thou hast given commandment to save me ;  
For thou *art* my rock and my fortress.
- 4 Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked,  
Out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.
- 5 For thou *art* my hope, O LORD GOD :  
*Thou art* my trust from my youth.
- 6 By thee have I been holden up from the womb :  
Thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels :  
*My praise shall be* continually of thee.
- 7 I am as a wonder unto many ;  
But thou *art* my strong refuge.
- 8 Let my mouth be filled *with* thy praise  
*And with* thy honour all the day.
- 9 Cast me not off in the time of old age ;  
Forsake me not when my strength faileth.

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PSALM lxxi. 1, 2. See note on Psalm xxxi. 1. "Display thy righteousness in delivering me and punishing my enemies."—*B.C.B.*

6. The parallelism between the first and second lines is not well preserved in our version of the latter. They should rather stand thus :—

By thee have I been holden up [or, on thee have I leaned for support]  
from the womb ;

From my mother's lap thou hast been my conductor [or, protector.]

7. *As a wonder*, "*as a prodigy* ; my low estate, my slaying the lion and bear, conquering the Philistine, escaping the fury of Saul, being raised to the throne of Israel, enduring such uncommon trials and afflictions, and experiencing such wonderful deliverances, all mark me out as the subject of 'wonder unto many ; but thou art my strong refuge.'"—*B.C.B.*

- 10 For mine enemies speak against me ;  
And they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together,  
11 Saying, God hath forsaken him :  
Persecute and take him ; for *there is none to deliver him.*  
12 O God, be not far from me :  
O my God, make haste for my help.  
13 Let them be confounded *and* consumed  
That are are adversaries to my soul ;  
Let them be covered *with* reproach and dishonour  
That seek my hurt.
- 14 But I will hope continually,  
And will yet praise thee more and more.  
15 My mouth shall show forth thy righteousness  
And thy salvation all the day ;  
For I know not the numbers *thereof.*  
16 I will go in the strength of the Lord God :  
I will make mention of thy righteousness, *even* of thine only..  
17 O God, thou hast taught me from my youth :  
And hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.  
18 Now also when I am old and greyheaded,  
O God, forsake me not ;

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10. *Mine enemies speak against me ; rather,—*

Mine enemies say concerning me,

And they that wait for my soul [or life] take counsel together, saying, &c.  
*both lines being introductory to what the enemies say in the next verse.*

15. The Hebrew words in this verse rendered *show forth*, and *numbers*, are derived from the same root, which, like our word *tell*, with its corresponding noun, *tale*, is ambiguous, signifying either to *declare* or to *number*. The analogy may be preserved by translating thus :—

My mouth shall *tell* of thy righteousness,

Thy salvation all the day ;

For I know not the *tale* thereof.

Though unceasingly employed in declaring or recounting thy mercies, I can never exhaust the theme, or complete the enumeration.

18. *Now also*, more correctly *and also* [or, *even*] *when I am* [or *shall be*] *old and greyheaded ;* or more literally, *And also to old age and grey hairs, &c.* There is nothing in the Hebrew giving the sense of *now*, or necessarily im-

- Until I have showed thy strength unto *this* generation,  
 And thy power to every one *that* is to come.
- 19 Thy righteousness also, O God, *is* very high,  
 Who hast done great things :  
 O God, who *is* like unto thee !
- 20 *Thou*, which hast showed me great and sore troubles,  
 Shalt quicken me again,  
 And shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.
- 21 Thou shalt increase my greatness,  
 And comfort me on every side.
- 22 I will also praise thee with the psaltery,  
*Even* thy truth, O my God :  
 Unto thee will I sing with the harp,  
 O thou Holy One of Israel.
- 23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee ;  
 And my soul which thou hast redeemed.
- 24 My tongue also shall talk  
 Of thy righteousness all the day long :  
 For they are confounded,  
 For they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.

PSALM LXXII.

*A Psalm for Solomon.*

*For Solomon.* The particle here rendered *for* is the same as in the titles generally is rendered *of*, indicating the writer of the Psalm. Some understand it so here, and consider the Psalm to have been composed by Solomon as a prophecy of the Messiah, having its historic basis in the relations of his own reign. The Hebrew particle, however, admits of either sense, and the contents of the Psalm, and particularly the intimation in verse 20, seem more in favour of the opinion of its having been written by David in his last days, when he had set Solomon on the throne, as a prayer for the righteous and prosperous reign of his beloved son ; but rising in elevation of thought and language to a greater than Solomon, or any earthly monarch.

plying that David had already arrived at this period of life ; though we may infer from the allusions here and in verse 9, that he was at least approaching it.

22. *Even thy truth* ; rather, *for thy truth*.

23. *My soul which thou hast redeemed.* The Psalmist here and in Psalm lxi. 18, employs this expression in reference to the preservation of his life from the destruction threatened by his enemies ; but it is equally applicable in the sense of spiritual redemption.

- 1 GIVE the king thy judgments, O God,  
And thy righteousness unto the king's son.
- 2 He shall judge thy people with righteousness,  
And thy poor with judgment.
- 3 The mountains shall bring peace to the people,  
And the little hills, by righteousness.
- 4 He shall judge the poor of the people,

PSALM lxxii. 1. *The judgments of God* usually denote His dealings with mankind, or His commandments and laws; but here the expression in connection with *righteousness* in the next line, seems to indicate the righteous judgments or decisions which the Psalmist prays that God would enable the king to execute, by enduing him with "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of the knowledge and of the fear of the Lord;" the basis of all the blessings prayed for or predicted throughout the Psalm. This spirit Solomon in his best days had in great measure, but Christ without measure. *The king*, and *the king's son*, agreeably to the idiom of Hebrew poetry, are two designations of the same person. Solomon was both a king and the son of a king, and so in a higher sense is Christ.

3. Some translators read *in righteousness* as commencing the fourth verse but this arrangement, though it seems at first sight plausible, is, on a closer examination, not satisfactory. The word is not required in verse 4, enough having already appeared to show that, when judgment is spoken of, it must mean righteous judgment, and the transposition not only leaves verse 3 defective in its poetic structure, by reducing it to one line, but also injures the sense, *righteousness* and *peace* being there associated as cause and effect. In the second line, the words *shall bring peace to the people*, must be understood from the first to complete the sense; and, in like manner, *by righteousness*, applies also to the first; and the whole, in simple prosaic form, would read:—The mountains and the little hills shall bring peace to the people by righteousness. Some expound the verse thus:—"The steep mountains on the frontier, strongly garrisoned, shall secure the land from hostile invasion, and the hills, cleared of banditti, under the government of the righteous king shall be the peaceful seats of a useful civilised peasantry;" but it may rather be understood as simply describing the peaceful condition of the country at large, the hills and mountains being mentioned as its more conspicuous and ornamental features; or in allusion to the custom still prevalent in the east, of proclaiming good or bad tidings from the tops of mountains, or other eminences.—See Isaiah lii. 7. Most of the old translators, omitting the preposition, read:—*The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills (shall bring) righteousness*; but it is more likely to have been omitted than inserted by the error of a transcriber.

- He shall save the children of the needy,  
And shall break in pieces the oppressor.
- 5 They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure,  
Throughout all generations.
- 6 He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass :  
As showers *that* water the earth.
- 7 In his days shall the righteous flourish ;  
And abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.
- 8 He shall have dominion also from sea to sea,  
And from the river unto the ends of the earth.
- 9 They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him ;  
And his enemies shall lick the dust.

5. Several of the ancient versions, instead of *They shall fear thee*, by a change of one letter in the Hebrew, read, *He shall continue*, or *endure* ; which accords better with the rest of the Psalm, where the king is spoken of throughout in the third person. This verse, in the full and proper sense of the terms employed, can be applied to no earthly king or dynasty.

6. *He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, &c.* "His word shall descend upon His people, and in their heart, as rain that descendeth upon the tender herb of the mown meadow, which stands in need of showers after the mowing."—*Yarchi*.

7. All the old versions, for *the righteous*, read *righteousness*, which answers better to *abundance of peace* in the succeeding line.

8. The terms here are similar to those employed in Ex. xxiii. 31, and 1 Kings iv. 21, 24, to describe the bounds of the kingdom of Israel, which attained its greatest extent in the reign of Solomon ; but they are without the limitations there expressed, and appear to denote a kingdom of boundless extent. The idea here enunciated, and carried to its climax in verse 11, which exhibits a like similarity to the description of Solomon's greatness in 1 Kings x. 23–25, is individualized in verses 9 and 10, by the mention of several districts or peoples, characterized by various distinctive features. *They that dwell in the wilderness*, alluding probably to the wild Arabs of the desert ; *Tarshish*, an important commercial city, generally considered to have been situate on the southern coast of Spain ; *the isles*, other distant places generally ; *Sheba*, whose queen visited Solomon, a district of Arabia Felix, celebrated for its gold, spices, and precious stones ; and *Saba*, probably a part of Ethiopia.

9. *His enemies shall lick the dust* ; i.e., as some explain, shall fall vanquished or slain, but the expression more probably refers to the eastern custom of prostration to the earth, in token of submission and homage.

- 10 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents :  
The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.
- 11 Yea, all kings shall fall down before him :  
All nations shall serve him.
- 12 For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth ;  
The poor also, and *him* that hath no helper.
- 13 He shall spare the poor and needy,  
And shall save the souls of the needy.
- 14 He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence :  
And precious shall their blood be in his sight.
- 15 And he shall live,  
And to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba :  
Prayer also shall be made for him continually ;  
And daily shall he be praised.
- 16 There shall be an handful of corn in the earth  
Upon the top of the mountains ;  
The fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon :

13. *He shall spare*, more correctly *compassionate*, or *comfort the poor and needy*; and *shall save the souls*, or *preserve the lives of the needy*.

14. *He shall redeem their soul*, or *rescue their life from deceit*; rather, *oppression and violence*; and *precious shall their blood be in his sight*. "He will esteem their life of great value, and will allow no one to shed their blood with impunity."—*Phillips*.

15. *Prayer also shall be made for him continually*. This clause, whilst very appropriate as respects a temporal sovereign, has been supposed to present a difficulty in the Messianic interpretation, as derogatory to the Divine nature of Christ; but prayer for His church, and the advancement of His kingdom, is in fact prayer for Himself.—See Matt. xxv. 40, &c.

16. The precise meaning of the word here translated *handful* is uncertain. Some render it *abundance*, but it may not improbably, as suggested by Horsley, be equivalent to our word *piece*, or *patch*, in its agricultural sense: *There shall be a piece, or patch of corn in the earth, or land, upon the top of the mountains*; implying its fertility and general cultivation. *The fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon*. The growing crop shall be strong and vigorous, rustling in the wind like the leaves of a mountain forest. *And they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth*. The abundant population shall be equal to the fruitfulness of the soil. This verse was literally verified in Solomon's days, when it is said (1 Kings iv. 20) "Judah and Israel were

- And *they* of the city shall flourish  
Like grass of the earth.
- 17 His name shall endure for ever :  
His name shall be continued as long as the sun :  
And *men* shall be blessed in him :  
All nations shall call him blessed.
- 18 Blessed *be* the LORD God, the God of Israel,  
Who only doeth wondrous things.
- 19 And blessed *be* his glorious name for ever :  
And let the whole earth be filled *with* his glory.  
Amen, and Amen.
- 20 The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.

# PSALM LXXIII.

A Psalm of [ *or, for* ] Asaph.

Respecting the name of *Asaph* in the titles of this and the ten following Psalms, see Psalm 1. Though some parts of the present Psalm are very applicable to the occasion of the destruction of Sennacherib's army

many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and making merry ;" and it may figuratively describe the rise and progress of the kingdom of Christ, and the increase of His subjects.

18, 19. See conclusion of Psalm xli. These verses do not belong to the Psalm, but contain the doxology which forms the conclusion of the second book. This doxology, which is the most copious that occurs, agrees very well with the contents of this Psalm, and was undoubtedly composed in reference to them. *May the whole earth be full of his glory* (as it shall be when all nations shall do homage to this His anointed), is taken word for word from Numb. xiv. 21.

20. This verse is by some understood to intimate that this was the last Psalm composed by David, or that it expresses the summit of his wishes and prayers. This supposition, as regards either or both of the facts which it assumes, may be true ; but it is more probable that this notice, placed not in immediate connection with the Psalm itself, but after the doxology which forms the conclusion to the second book, was designed to indicate the termination of that portion of the Psalter which consists principally of David's Psalms, though his name is prefixed to some in the subsequent divisions. At the same time, it seems to furnish an argument for the Davidic origin of the Psalm, as such a note would not be so likely to be appended to one not attributed to him.



(2 Kings xix.), there seems no substantial ground for assigning its composition to that or any other particular event, the references being of a general and *individual*, not *national* character. "After shortly expressing the truth which had been awakened in an especial manner in his own heart, and which he desires to awaken in the hearts of the members of the Church, that God is always good to His people, the Psalmist represents the facts which had caused him to waver in this belief, in a picturesque description of the prosperity of the ungodly; depicts the conflicts and struggles into which he was thereby brought, and the victory which he gained when brought by the grace of God to know that the prosperity of the wicked and the sufferings of the righteous are alike *transitory*; complains of his own foolishness as the source of his doubts; praises the grace of God, which had removed these from him; and expresses his unqualified assurance of the Divine assistance, and of salvation."—*Hengstenberg*.

- 1 TRULY God *is* good to Israel,  
Even to such as are of a clean heart.
- 2 But as for me, my feet were almost gone;  
My steps had well nigh slipped.
- 3 For I was envious at the foolish,  
When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
- 4 For *there are* no bands in their death:  
But their strength *is* firm.

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PSALM lxxiii. 1. *Truly God is good, &c.*; or, as it may be rendered, *God is only good—i.e.*, never otherwise than good, though not always apparently so; as expressed in the lines—

"Good when He gives, supremely good,  
Nor less when He denies;  
E'en sorrows from His sovereign hand  
Are blessings in disguise."

3. *Foolish*; rather *arrogant*, or *vain-glorious*, as in Psalm v. 5.

4. *There are no bands in their death*. It is not easy to extract any clear meaning from this verse, and the original is obscure. The word rendered *bands* occurs only here and in Isaiah lviii. 6, where that is doubtless its meaning. Bishop Horsley thinks it may here denote figuratively the strongest of all bands—physical necessity. "*There is no fatality in, or of their death*; no necessary and immediate connection between moral evil and physical—wickedness and death." Hengstenberg renders:—"They are not fettered to death," and remarks, "the fetters denote the death-bringing circumstances which God *suspends* over the guilty," but which will fall upon them at last. Others think the words in question, as in the case of a cognate term of more frequent occurrence, may also signify *pains* or *tortments*—*There are no pangs in their death*. "They die with ease."—*Kimchi*. But this is not only unsuitable to the context, which relates not to the easy death, but

- 5 They are not in trouble as other men ;  
Neither are they plagued like other men.
- 6 Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain ;  
Violence covereth them as a garment.
- 7 Their eyes stand out with fatness :  
They have more than heart could wish.
- 8 They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression :  
They speak loftily.
- 9 They set their mouth against the heavens,  
And their tongue walketh through the earth.

to the prosperous life of the wicked, but is also at variance with verses 18—20, which depict their sudden destruction. Assuming, however, this as the meaning of the noun, a more apposite rendering is obtained by giving to the preposition, which is *to*, not *in*, the sense of *until*—*They have no pains till their death*. They continue to enjoy a life of ease. Some translators adopt a different division of the words, but without altering a letter, as Boothroyd, who renders the verse thus:—

“For they have no painful diseases ;  
But sound and firm is their strength.”

This, however, is sanctioned by scarcely any Hebrew MSS., and none of the ancient versions ; and the previous expositions seem on the whole the most satisfactory.

6. *Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain*, i.e., an ornamental chain or necklace. *Violence covereth them as a garment*, or robe. They glory in their lawless deeds, and exhibit their pride in their haughty mien or splendid attire.

7. *Their eyes stand out with fatness*. Most of the old translators, by a change of one letter, for *eyes*, read *iniquities*. Boothroyd, adopting this reading, renders:—“From within issue their iniquities” but the common reading and version seem better supported and more apposite to the preceding verse. “The external appearance comes into view only as a reflection and expression of their carnal mind, which so often displays itself by such appearances.”—*Hengstenberg*. *They have more than heart could wish* ; rather, *expect*, for unregulated desire is insatiable : literally, *They exceed the imagination of their heart*, or, as some render it, *The thoughts or designs of their heart burst forth*, or *overflow* ; but the former accords better with the common reading of the previous line.

8. This verse appears to be more correctly rendered:—*They scoff and speak wickedly ; they speak oppression loftily* ; that is, words tending to oppression.

9. *They set their mouth against*, rather *in*, *the heavens*. “What they say must be said from heaven.”—*Luther*. The verse expresses the loftiness and extent of their ambition.

- 10 Therefore his people return hither :  
And waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.
- 11 And they say, How doth God know ?  
And, Is there any knowledge in the Most High ?
- 12 Behold, these *are* the ungodly, who prosper in the world ;  
They increase in riches.
- 13 Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain,  
And washed my hands in innocency.
- 14 For all the day long have I been plagued,  
And chastened every morning.

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10. The Psalmist appears here to refer to the effect produced on the minds of others by the sight of the prosperously wicked ; but what is the antecedent to *his* is not clear. Some refer it to the *wicked*, or any one of the wicked who *turns his people hither* ; i.e., draws others from the right path ; but as the wicked are spoken of throughout in the plural, it seems more in accordance with grammatical propriety, as well as to afford a better sense, to refer to verse 1 for the antecedent ; thus it will be *God's people*. *Waters of a full cup* may denote joy or prosperity, or the reverse ; but the expression *wrung out* (more properly *drained out*), is more suitable to the latter. Thus, understanding verses 11, 12, to contain what is uttered by *his people*, the purport of the whole will be that those who have lived in the fear of God may be tempted to swerve from the path of rectitude, distressed with anxious and repining thoughts, and even be led to question the moral government of God and His cognizance of the affairs of men, who permits the ungodly thus to triumph.

12. *Who prosper in the world* ; rather, *who continually prosper*, or go on prospering. The Hebrew word signifies literally *for ever*. *The world* is a sense which it did not acquire till a later period.

13. *Washing the hands* was a token of innocency (see Matt. xxvii. 24), so *washing the hands in innocency* expresses being actually so. The Psalmist, having described the prosperity of the wicked, and the snare into which others may fall from the contemplation of it, reverts to the point from which he had digressed, its effect upon his own mind ; and contrasting his own lot with theirs, complains that purity of heart and conduct affords no exemption from affliction, but immediately checking himself adds : Were I to indulge such feelings and give utterance to them *I should offend against*, rather, *treacherously forsake the generation of thy children* ; betray the cause of religion, and renounce the principles upheld by Thy true worshippers. He then sets forth the difficulty he had found in the investigation of the subject, and his inability of himself to arrive at a satisfactory solution of it.

- 15 If I say I will speak thus ;  
Behold I should offend *against* the generation of thy children.
- 16 When I thought to know this,  
It *was* too painful for me ;
- 17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God ;  
Then understood I their end.
- 18 Surely thou didst set them in slippery places ;  
Thou castedst them down into destruction.
- 19 How are they *brought* into desolation, as in a moment !  
They are utterly consumed with terrors.
- 20 As a dream when *one* awaketh ;  
So, O LORD, when thou awakest,  
Thou shalt despise their image.
- 21 Thus my heart was grieved,  
And I was pricked in my reins.
- 22 So foolish *was* I, and ignorant :  
I *was as* a beast before thee.
- 23 Nevertheless, I *am* continually with thee :  
Thou hast holden *me* by my right hand.
- 24 Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel,  
And afterward receive me *to* glory.
- 25 Whom have I in heaven *but thee* ?  
And *there is* none upon earth *that* I desire beside thee.

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18. *Thou castedst them down into destruction, or precipices.* "Those high places which they have occupied are nothing more than precipices, whence they are cast down and brought to certain destruction."—*Phillips*.

19. *Consumed with terrors ; or sudden destruction.*

20. *When thou awakest.* The Hebrew is simply *in awaking*, and the ellipsis seems incorrectly supplied ; it should rather be *When they awake*, or, *when thou causest them to awake*, i.e., from their dream of greatness, *thou wilt despise their image* ; render contemptible, or cause to vanish, their vain show and imaginary felicity.

23. *Nevertheless I am*, rather *have been, continually with thee*. The Psalmist in this verse appears to commemorate the good providence of God, which, amidst all his perplexities and want of right perception, had kept him from falling, as a foundation for the confiding trust for the future, expressed in the concluding verses.

- 26 My flesh and my heart faileth :  
*But God is the strength of my heart,*  
 And my portion for ever.
- 27 For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish :  
 Thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.
- 28 But *it is* good for me to draw near to God :  
 I have put my trust in the Lord God,  
 That I may declare all thy works.

## PSALM LXXIV.

Maschil of Asaph [*or, A Psalm for Asaph to give instruction.*]

This Psalm is, by the majority of expositors, considered to refer to the destruction of the temple by the Chaldeans; but others assign it to the persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes. Independently of the improbability that any portion of the Old Testament canon was composed at so late a period, the reasons against the latter view presented by the Psalm itself are, remarks Hengstenberg, "perfectly decisive." The temple appears in the Psalm as entirely destroyed, and that by fire, in all its parts. From 1 Mac. iv. 38, where the condition in which Judas found the temple is described, it is evident that at that time the chief buildings of the temple were untouched, and that it was only the *gates* that had been burned; 2 Mac. i. 8 and viii. 33, are in entire accordance with this. The reason why the Jews, according to 1 Mac. iv. 28, built the holy and the most holy place, is not because these had been destroyed, but because, as is almost in so many words affirmed in verse 43, the stones which had been removed as being polluted had to be replaced with others. To this we may add that we find here nothing of what characterized the time of the Maccabees, no trace of an apostate party among the Jews themselves, no trace of any attempt to bring the Israelites to idolatry, no trace of a religious war. We stand here entirely upon Assyrian-Chaldean ground, as will be obvious on comparing 2 Kings xviii., xix. (particularly xix. 4 with verse 10 of our Psalm): the contest is not *god* against God, but *man* against God." For the reasons against the Chaldean destruction, see on verses 8 and 9. Some expound the Psalm as prophetic of the destruction by the Romans and the subsequent condition of the Jews; but however applicable some parts may be to the final catastrophe, there can be no reasonable doubt that it depicts a state of things already existing, and it claims for the sufferers a character as the people of God, which would not be appropriate at the later period.

1 O GOD, why hast thou cast us off for ever ?  
*Why doth thine anger smoke*

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28. "The Septuagint, Vulgate, Arabic, and Ethiopic add, *in the gates of the daughter of Zion*; which makes a better conclusion; but it is not acknowledged by any MS. yet collated."—*B.C.B.*

- Against the sheep of thy pasture ?
- 2 Remember thy congregation,  
Which thou hast purchased of old ;  
The rod of thine inheritance,  
Which thou hast redeemed ;  
This mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt.
- 3 Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations ;  
Even all that the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary.
- 4 Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations ;  
They set up their ensigns for signs.
- 5 A man was famous according as he had lifted up axes  
Upon the thick trees.

PSALM LXXIV. 1. *Us*, in the first line, and *why* in the second, are not in the original; the sense in each case being completed by understanding a word from the other line, thus:

Why, O God, hast thou cast off for ever (the sheep of thy pasture) ?  
(Why) doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture ?

2. *Rod*, "or tribe. *Shaivet* also signifies a *sceptre*, and may here mean—the sovereignty of thine inheritance, alluding to the theocracy of the Israelites."  
—B.C.B.

3. *Lift up thy feet*, i.e., Come, or come with speed or alacrity, to behold or visit. The same mode of expression occurs in the original in Gen. xxix. 1, "*Jacob went on his journey*," literally, *lifted up his feet*. *Even all that the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary*; more correctly, *all the evil* (i.e., mischief or destruction) *which the enemy hath done in the sanctuary*.

4. The Chaldeans rushing into the temple, shouting for victory amid the affrighted worshippers, and setting up their standards, or erecting trophies of success on that sacred ground, seem to be here described. *They set up their ensigns for signs*. The two words are the same in the Hebrew, literally, *They set up their signs-signs*. "Where formerly everything had testified of the dominion of God, now everything testifies of the dominion of the heathen."—Hengstenberg. Respecting *congregations* see on verse 8.

5. *A man was famous*. The original is obscure; literally, *he*, or *it*, was *known*. Boothroyd, taking the verb to be used impersonally and collectively, renders:—"As men are seen with uplifted axes, &c.," but the sense may rather be, *he* (the enemy or the leader) *renders himself conspicuous*, or *makes himself look, like one lifting up axes upon the thick trees*. The purport of this and the next verse no doubt is:—They cast down and demolish the carved work of the sanctuary (see 1 Kings vi. 18, 29) with as little concern or reverence as a woodman felling trees in a forest.

- 6 But now they break down the carved work thereof  
At once with axes and hammers.
- 7 They have cast fire into thy sanctuary,  
They have defiled *by casting down* the dwelling place of thy  
name to the ground.
- 8 They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them together :  
They have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land.

7. The second clause may be translated without supplying the words in italics. *They have defiled, or profaned, the dwelling place of thy name to the ground; i.e., to the lowest point of degradation, the opposite of the phrase, to exalt unto heaven.* For the historical basis of this and the preceding verses, see 2 Kings xxv. 8-17, 2 Ch. xxxvi. 17-19, Jer. lii. 12-27. The object of the Chaldeans in breaking down the carved work of the temple might be to obtain the precious metals with which some parts were overlaid or connected.

8. The mention of *synagogues* has been alleged as incompatible with the times of the Chaldean destruction, as we have no record of the existence of those erections till after the captivity, though the date and circumstances of their origin are not ascertained. But there is no proof that the word here used by the Psalmist, which is the same as in verse 4 is rendered *congregations*, denotes *synagogues*. It is not the term by which they are designated in the later Hebrew writings; but one of frequent occurrence in Scripture, signifying *an appointed time or place, a feast or religious solemnity, and an assembly or congregation*. In Lam. ii. 6, the only instance except in the present Psalm in which it is considered to denote the *place or building*, our translators render it *place of assembly*, but it may there mean the congregation itself. The Seventy there render it *feast*, as they do in both cases in this Psalm. Their version of the present clause, "Let us abolish all the feasts of God from the land," would indicate a different reading of the verb, but some MSS., by a change of one letter in the Greek, correspond with the Hebrew text, except in the difference of person, *LET us burn down, &c.* The *place*, rather than the congregation or solemnity itself, seems to suit the context here, as well as in verse 4, for the scene there depicted appears to represent the enemy in full possession of the sanctuary and committing their ravages upon it. Some understand the word in question in the present verse, as well as in the former, to refer to the temple itself with all its apartments. "The expression, *all in the land*," remarks Hengstenberg, "has been incorrectly supposed not be applicable to the temple. The sanctuaries in Jerusalem were all the places of revelation of God that were in the land, and the circumstance that when the temple was destroyed there was not another such place to be found, must

- 9 We see not our signs :  
*There is no more any prophet :*  
*Neither is there among us any that knoweth how long.*
- 10 O God, how long shall the adversary reproach ?  
 Shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever ?
- 11 Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand ?  
 Pluck it out of thy bosom.

have peculiarly aggravated the pain which an Israelite felt, and was a proof of the extent to which God's honour was at stake, and His interests endangered. The assertion of those who are in favour of the Maccabean origin of the Psalm, that these words describe the destruction of the *synagogues*, is met by the remark, that in all the copious accounts which we have of the transactions of those times, there is nothing said of any such work of destruction." Dr. Kitto (see *Biblical Cyclopædia*) supposes the Psalmist may refer to the schools of the prophets, which might be the occasional resort of pious persons for religious exercises or instruction, and that this may have been the germ out of which the proper synagogue worship arose; but when the Chaldeans had destroyed the seat of the national worship, with the chief public and private buildings of Jerusalem, and carried the principal inhabitants captive, leaving only "the poor of the land for husbandmen and vine-dressers," it does not seem probable that they should attach so much importance to any places of this kind, as to induce their systematic destruction by fire.

9. "The *signs* of the Israelites are the signs of the dominion of their God, whose places had been occupied by the signs of the enemies, verse 4." —*Hengstenberg*. This verse has been deemed irreconcilable with the period of the Chaldean invasion, as the prophet Jeremiah was then living and had predicted seventy years as the duration of the captivity; but his prophetic office appears to have ceased at the destruction of Jerusalem, and he was soon after carried into Egypt; and Ezekiel and Daniel, who prophesied during the captivity, were themselves captives; so that there was no prophet in the land of Judea, nor any one who could go about preaching repentance, or whose declarations were likely to be generally known to his fellow-countrymen, whether dispersed or left in the land. In fact, the expression here is tantamount to that of Jeremiah himself in Lam. ii. 9. His prediction of the period of the captivity, uttered twelve years before its commencement, might, amidst the ensuing troubles, be little known, or not held in vivid recollection. "By the *knowing how long* is meant a *living knowledge*. On the first infliction of the stroke no man could take the comfort of this announcement, and no man ought to have done so till the infliction had served its purpose." —*Hengstenberg*.



- 12 For God is my King of old,  
Working salvation in the midst of the earth.
- 13 Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength :  
Thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters.
- 14 Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces,  
And gavest him to be meat to the people  
Inhabiting the wilderness.
- 15 Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood :  
Thou driedst up mighty rivers.
- 16 The day is thine, the night also is thine :  
Thou hast prepared the light and the sun.
- 17 Thou hast set all the borders of the earth :  
Thou hast made summer and winter.
- 18 Remember this, *that* the enemy hath reproached, O  
LORD,  
And *that* the foolish people have blasphemed thy name.
- 19 O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the multitude  
of the wicked :  
Forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever.
- 20 Have respect unto the covenant :

13, 14. These verses are generally understood as referring to the deliverance out of Egypt ; *leviathan* or the *crocodile* symbolizing the Egyptian government ; its *heads*, Pharaoh and his chief captains ; and the *dragons*, the Egyptian people (see *B.C.B.*) ; but as the succeeding ones describe the dominion of God over *nature* and not over *man*, a more literal interpretation seems to accord better with the context. *The people inhabiting the wilderness* may denote the *ichthyophagi* or fish-eaters, who are described by ancient authors as subsisting on the whales cast up on the shore, and having abundance of food on account of the great size of the beasts found.

19. *O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the multitude of the wicked* ; “ rather, *O deliver not thy turtle-dove to the beasts, or birds, of prey*. Thy people Israel are afflicted and miserable, and weak, helpless, and defenceless as a turtle-dove, the smallest of her tribe—*O deliver them not into the power of their brutal adversaries.*”—*B.C.B.* *Congregation* ; or, *life*.

20. *The dark places, &c.* Some understand it of those parts of the earth which have not been blessed with the light of true religion. This is undoubtedly true, but it seems more in accordance with the tenor of the Psalm to consider it as referring to caves, dens, and woods of the land,

- For the dark places of the earth  
Are full of the habitations of cruelty.
- 21 O let not the oppressed return ashamed :  
Let the poor and needy praise thy name.
- 22 Arise, O God, plead thine own cause :  
Remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily.
- 23 Forget not the voice of thine enemies :  
The tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually.

PSALM LXXV.

To the chief Musician, Altaschith [*or, Destroy not*]. A Psalm or Song of  
[*or, for*] Asaph.

"Some consider this Psalm to have been written by David on his accession to the throne over all Israel; others refer it to the time of the captivity, considering it as a continuation of the subject of the preceding; but Bishop Patrick and others are of opinion that it was composed by Asaph to commemorate the overthrow of Sennacherib's army—2 Kings xix."—*B.C.B.* On *Altaschith*, see on Psalm lviii., and on *A Psalm or Song*, see on Psalm xlviii.

- 1 UNTO thee, O God, do we give thanks,  
Unto thee do we give thanks.  
For that thy name is near  
Thy wondrous works declare.
- 2 When I shall receive the congregation  
I will judge uprightly.

infested with robbers and murderers. *Habitations of cruelty*; rather, *violence*. "*Haunts of violence.*"—*Boothroyd*.

PSALM LXXV. 1. By adhering to the order of the original, the words *unto thee*, repeated by the translators, are not required; *We give thanks*, or *praise, unto thee O God; we give praise, &c.* *Thy name* here is equivalent to *thyself*, or, *thy power*. The old versions read the last clause thus:—*We will call upon thy name, we will declare thy wondrous works*; but this is more likely to have been substituted for that of the Hebrew text than *vice versa*.

2. For the several meanings of the word here rendered *congregation*, see on verse 8 of preceding Psalm. The old translators here render it as a set time:—*When I shall take a set time, i.e., when the due time arrives*. Most commentators understand this and the next verse as spoken by God; but

- 3 The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved :  
I bear up the pillars of it. *Selah.*
- 4 I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly :  
And to the wicked, Lift not up the horn :  
5 Lift not up your horn on high :  
Speak *not with a stiff neck.*

apply them in various ways. Phillips paraphrases them thus :—"I will truly take a fit time for judging the whole world in righteousness, and if I seem to delay the execution of justice, it is because I am slow to anger, and desire to give the wicked opportunity for repentance. Although the earth be in a dissolving condition because of the waters on which it is founded, yet I make it firm as a building supported by strong pillars." But the passage is generally taken in a more restricted sense, as applying to the circumstances of the Israelites at some period or other. Hengstenberg, who refers the Psalm to the overthrow of the Assyrians, explains :—"The earth, in consequence of the success of the conqueror of the world, is as it were dissolved, sunk back into its ancient chaotic state ; but the same Omnipotence which at that time brought its dissolution to an end, shall aid it now." In the adoption, however, of the more restricted mode of interpretation, the abrupt transition from the Psalmist to God, as the speaker, may be avoided by considering the former speaking throughout in the name of some prince or eminent person, who had been the means of restoring order and prosperity after a period of anarchy or irreligion. Thus Boothroyd, who refers it to the establishment of order by David after the unsettled state of public affairs during the latter part of Saul's reign, and the contest between the houses of Saul and David, renders :—"Since I obtained a convenient season I have judged with integrity. The land with its inhabitants was dissolved, but its pillars I have re-established." Jebb takes a similar view, "The speaker," he remarks, "is a righteous king of Israel, in all likelihood Jehoshaphat, now newly possessed of his kingdom. He declares his intention of making the Divine law the guide of his administration, when he receives the congregation ; i.e., when he enters on the duties of his government," and avows the "great weight of responsibility which he feels in reconstructing and propping up the social edifice." It seems, however, no less appropriate to the reformation of religion by Hezekiah than to that by Jehoshaphat. After the three introductory verses, terminated by *Selah*, "follows the main subject, which consists of his address to the ungodly among his people," and "the Psalm ends as it began, with ascribing praise to God."

5. "Mr. Bruce observes that the Abyssinian kings have a *horn* on their diadem, and that the keeping it erect or in a projecting form makes them appear as if they had a *stiff neck* ; and he refers to this passage for the

- 6 For promotion *cometh* neither from the east,  
Nor from the west, nor from the south.
- 7 But God *is* the judge :  
He putteth down one, and setteth up another.
- 8 For in the hand of the LORD *there is* a cup,  
And the wine is red ;  
It is full of mixture ; and he poureth out of the same :  
But the dregs thereof,  
All the wicked of the earth shall wring *them* out, and drink  
*them*.
- 9 But I will declare for ever ;  
I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.
- 10 All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off ;  
*But* the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

antiquity of the usage, and the appearance also.”—*B.C.B.* This illustration seems apposite, but the allusion may probably be to the habits and properties of horned beasts, which frequently furnish to the sacred writers an emblem of strength or power, dignity or glory, arrogance or pride ; and when the horn is of great weight, or is designed as an instrument of attack or defence, a proportionate strength of neck is requisite to enable the animal to wield it. *To speak with a stiff neck* is equivalent to *proudly* or *arrogantly*.

8. It does not appear that the custom of giving “medicated wine, or potion of stupefying drugs to criminals to drink previous to their execution,” which is thought in *B.C.B.* to illustrate this verse, was known to the ancient Israelites, though it might be practised in later times in connection with the lingering and excruciating mode of death by crucifixion, which prevailed under their subjugation by the Romans ; but the present passage admits, if not requires, a more comprehensive exposition, embracing the Divine dispensations both of kindness and punishment, which the figure of a cup is employed in Scripture to express. *In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red* ; rather, *turbid*, from having stood long on the lees to acquire its full strength ; *it is full of mixture*, or, *the mixture is full* ; spices or other ingredients being mingled in due proportions to confer additional strength and flavour ; *and he poureth out of the same*—the pure clear wine as a cup of blessing to the righteous ; or, as several of the old versions read, *he poureth it out here and there* ; *i.e.*, in the various dispensations of his providence ; *but the dregs thereof*, the thick and turbid residue, *all the wicked of the earth shall wring*, more properly *drain*, *them out and drink them*.

9. *But I will declare for ever*, *i.e.*, *thy praise*, understood from the next line.

## PSALM LXXVI.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth. A Psalm or Song of [or, for] Asaph.

"This Psalm is entitled in the Septuagint, which is followed by the Vulgate and Apollinarius, 'An ode against the Assyrian;' and it is considered by many of the best commentators to have been composed by Asaph after the defeat of Sennacherib,"—(B.C.B.) to which occasion it appears remarkably appropriate. It is divided by *Selah* into three parts. "The exordium, (verses 1-3,) celebrates the Almighty's power and presence among His people, especially in Jerusalem and Mount Zion, from whence proceeded the display of His might in vanquishing the hosts of Sennacherib. The second part, (verses 4-9,) recounts this awful event, representing the sudden death of the besiegers under the sublime image of a deep trance, and celebrating its effects in words expressive of most appalling emotions of awe. The conclusion, (verses 10-12,) applies this event to all times and places, and is antiphonal to the first part; the greatness of God, His worship, and His judgments being the three topics in each."—*Jebb*. ab.

- 1 IN Judah is God known :  
His name is great in Israel.
- 2 In Salem also is his tabernacle,  
And his dwelling place in Zion.
- 3 There brake he the arrows of the bow,  
The shield, and the sword, and the battle. *Selah*.

PSALM lxxvi. 2. "The ancient name *Salem* (Gen. xiv. 18), of which Jerusalem was an enlarged form (*Salem*, the peaceful place, *Jerusalem*, the possession or inheritance of peace), is used here to indicate that it is significant. Wherever the Lord dwells, security and peace are there."—*Hengstenberg*.

3. *Arrows of the bow* sounds tautological; but the Hebrew word does not of itself signify *arrows*; literally *the flames or lightnings of the bow*—a poetical phrase for arrows which may be simply expressive of their force and velocity, or may refer to the circumstance of their being sometimes ignited. "Servius, on Virgil's *Æneid*, Book ix. v. 705, describes *fiery arrows of the bow* as a dart or javelin with a spherical leaden head to which fire was attached. When thrown by a powerful hand, it killed those whom it hit, and set fire to buildings, &c."—B.C.B. The *battle* is by many considered to signify here the weapons of war in accordance with those just enumerated; but it may be taken literally, as in the parallel passage, Psalm xli. 9:—He hath rendered the weapons powerless, and put an end to the battle, or made the war to cease.

- 4 Thou *art* more glorious and excellent  
Than the mountains of prey.
- 5 The stout-hearted are spoiled,  
They have slept their sleep :  
And none of the men of might have found their hands.
- 6 At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob,  
Both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep.
- 7 Thou, *even* thou, *art* to be feared :  
And who may stand in thy sight  
When once thou art angry ?
- 8 Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven ;  
The earth feared, and was still,

4. This verse is variously rendered and explained. It is generally understood as addressed to God. The particle prefixed to *mountains* may either denote comparison or simply *from*. So most of the old versions. *Thou shinest marvellously from the everlasting mountains, or from thy strong mountain, i.e.,* heaven or Mount Zion ; or, *Thou art glorious and excellent from the mountains of prey, i.e.,* thou wentest forth to the destruction of the invading host, as a lion from the mountains rushing on his prey. Modern translators generally take it comparatively, *Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey, i.e.,* than kings who dwell in mountain fortresses, where they collect their spoil ; or than powerful, plundering kingdoms, supposing these to be figuratively designated by *the mountains of prey*. Either of the above expositions affords an appropriate sense, but it seems more simple and satisfactory to read it as an apostrophe to Mount Zion just before mentioned, "which was more illustrious and excellent than all the mountains of prey, *i.e.,* where wild beasts wander, and prey on those that are more helpless than themselves."—*B.C.B.*

5, 6. *None of the men of might have found their hands, i.e.,* they are become utterly powerless. *Both the chariot and horse ;* rather, *the rider* (for the Hebrew word may signify either) *and horse*. "It is not improbable that the pestilence in Sennacherib's army might seize the horses as well as the men, although the death of the former is not mentioned by the sacred historian."—*Horsley*. "The poet," remarks Tholuck, "describes the scene as if we were walking along with him through the camp, which such a short time ago was so full of life, but is now silent as death."

8. "God is represented as first pronouncing the sentence on His enemies, and then arising to execute it. The countries of the heathen feared, while that of Israel was quiet and tranquil."—*Boothroyd*.

- 9 When God arose to judgment,  
To save all the meek of the earth. Selah.
- 10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee :  
The remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.
- 11 Vow, and pay unto the LORD your God :  
Let all that be round about him bring presents unto him  
that ought to be feared.
- 12 He shall cut off the spirit of princes :  
*He is terrible to the kings of the earth.*

## PSALM LXXVII.

To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun. A Psalm of [or, for] Asaph.

To (Heb. *upon*) *Jeduthun*.—See on Psalm lxii. "By many persons this is considered a national song composed at the time of the captivity, rather than that of an individual, because there are recited some national mercies, for administering comfort and re-establishing confidence. But the Psalmist has composed it in the first person, as if he himself individually were the subject, and there is no reason why in his individual capacity he might not turn his contemplations to those remarkable acts of Divine mercy bestowed on the nation, and on which the people, both individually and collectively, delighted to dwell, especially when under the circumstances which suggested the writing of this Psalm. It evidently describes an individual mind brooding over calamities; it exhibits a sort of contest between distrust and confidence, and when the inspired penman is on the point of giving way to despair, he suddenly fixes his thoughts on those especial interpositions of providence recorded in his country's annals; when

9. *The meek; rather the suffering or afflicted.*

10. *Surely the wrath, or violence, of man shall praise thee*, in being made subservient to thy purposes, or illustrating thy justice and glory in its punishment. *The remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.* What will not redound to Thy praise Thou wilt not suffer to break forth. The more correct rendering of the latter clause, however, seems to be, *With the remainder of wrath thou wilt gird thyself.* "God girds Himself with the remainder of wrath directed against Him. The wrath of His enemies must even to the last remnant serve Him as a weapon by which to accomplish their destruction."—*Hengstenberg*. The old versions differ from the present Hebrew; the Septuagint and Vulgate read; "For the inward thought of man shall give thanks to thee; and the memorial of his inward thought shall keep a feast to thee." Our Coverdale's version is peculiar; When thou punyshest one man he must knowlege (acknowledge) that thou art redy to punysh other mo (more)."

11. *Vow and pay, i.e., your vows.*

his sorrows are alleviated and faith becomes victorious.”—*Phillips*. If *Jeduthun* and *Asaph* refer to the individuals of those names recorded in Scripture, the Psalm must be assigned to the time of David; and the style, remarks *Jebb*, “seems to be strongly Davidical. The whole course of reflection, and the use made at the concluding part of the sublime imagery, are exactly in his manner.” “It consists of four parts, marked by *Selah*. In the first (verses 1–3), the Psalmist relates his deep distress, which is the preface to the complaint so pathetically expressed in the second division (verses 4–9), where he remembers indeed past mercies, but fears that these will never return. In the third part (verses 10–15), his faith returns, he hopefully recalls the wonders of old time, and the deliverance afforded to the chosen people, whose passage through the Red Sea forms the particular subject of the concluding strophe (verses 16–20).”—*Jebb* ab. “The object of the Psalm is to instruct us how we may obtain consolation and peace in the severest distresses, by plunging into the earlier manifestations of the grace of God.”—*Hengstenberg*.

- 1 I CRIED unto God with my voice,  
Even unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me.
- 2 In the day of my trouble, I sought the LORD:  
My sore ran in the night, and ceased not:  
My soul refused to be comforted.
- 3 I remembered God, and was troubled:  
I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. *Selah*.

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PSALM lxxvii. 1. This verse consists in the original of two exactly parallel lines, literally:—

My voice (was) to God, and I cried;  
My voice (was) to God, and he hearkened to me.

2. *My sore ran*. This rendering, “which,” remarks Adam Clarke, “is most unaccountable,” appears to be peculiar to our version, and a few immediately preceding it. Our translators might have found a better precedent among their earlier predecessors, as Coverdale; “I held up my hondes unto Him in the night season, for my soul refused all other comfort.” Purver, taking *hand* in the sense of power or strength, renders: “My strength flowed away at night without ceasing;” but the exposition given in B.C.B.: “My hand was stretched out by night and ceased not, or, without intermission,” is preferable, and with the exceptions just noticed, to which may be added the Chaldee—“Mine eyes shed tears during the night,” and the Syriac: “His hand chastened me in the night,” both founded on different readings of the original text, has the general support of translators, ancient and modern.

3. *I remembered God and was troubled*. Not that his remembrance of God was the cause of his trouble: the conjunction here has the force of *yet* or *when*, as rendered by Luther and Coverdale: “When I was in heaviness I



- 4 Thou holdest mine eyes waking :  
     I am so troubled that I cannot speak.  
 5 I have considered the days of old,  
     The years of ancient times.  
 6 I call to remembrance my song in the night :  
     I commune with mine own heart :  
     And my spirit made diligent search.  
 7 Will the LORD cast off for ever ?  
     And will he be favourable no more ?  
 8 Is his mercy clean gone for ever ?  
     Doth his promise fail for evermore ?  
 9 Hath God forgotten to be gracious ?  
     Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies ? Selah.  
 10 And I said, This is my infirmity :  
     *But I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.*

thought upon God. When my heart was vexed then did I speake." The last word, as well as our rendering, *I complained*, appears to contradict the next verse. It should rather be *I meditated*, the Hebrew being the same as so rendered in verse 12, and *communed* in verse 6.

6. *I call to remembrance my song, or music, in the night.* Chaldee—"My praise," i.e., my joyful nights in times past, my "thanksgiving, and the gracious deeds which had called it forth."—*Hengstenberg*.

10. This rather obscure passage is variously interpreted. "Dr. Waterland renders: 'This my affliction is a change of the right hand of the Most High,' i.e., it proceeds from a change of God's conduct towards me. De Dieu renders, 'To pray, this is my business: to change the right hand of the Most High,' i.e., I can do nothing else than pray: God is the ruler of events."—*B.C.B.* Several of the old versions read, *Now I have begun* (to hope, or to take a proper view of my affliction) *this is the change of the right hand of the Most High.* Our Coverdale, "who," says Adam Clarke, "takes the passage by storm," renders, "At the last I came to this poynte, that I thought, O why art thou so foolish? the right honde of the Most Hyest can chaunge all;" with which Dathe's Latin version closely accords: "Tandem sic mi consolor, mihi quidem hæc sunt perferenda; dextra vero Dei summi omnia in melius mutare potest." The Bishops', *This is my death; but the right hand of the Most Highest may grant me years.* After all, our common version, though supported by none of the ancient and but few modern translators, appears most in accordance with the original text (the word rendered *years*, on which the ambiguity

- 11 I will remember the works of the LORD :  
Surely I will remember thy wonders of old.
- 12 I will meditate also of all thy work,  
And talk of thy doings.
- 13 Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary :  
Who is so great a God as our God ?
- 14 Thou art the God that doest wonders :  
Thou hast declared thy strength among the people.
- 15 Thou hast with *thine* arm redeemed thy people,  
The sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.
- 16 The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee ;  
They were afraid :  
The depths also were troubled.
- 17 The clouds poured out water :  
The skies sent out a sound :  
Thine arrows also went abroad.

mainly rests, being the same as in verse 5, and seldom occurring in any other sense), and forms a most appropriate transition to the ensuing commemoration of *the works of the Lord, and His wonders of old*. The *years of the right hand of the Most High* may be regarded, though an unusual yet a poetical and emphatic expression, for the times when His power was signally displayed on behalf of His people. The ellipsis is naturally supplied from the next line, or it may be obviated by a change of punctuation, thus :—

And I said, This (despondency) is my infirmity.

The years of the right hand of the Most High will I remember,—the works of Jehovah.

Yea, I will remember thy wonders of old.

13. *Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary, or in holiness, i.e., absolutely holy.*

16. "The waters of the Red Sea are here beautifully represented as endued with sensibility, as seeing, feeling, and being confounded even to the lowest depths at the presence and power of their great Creator, when He commanded them to open a way, and to form a wall on each side of it, until His people were passed over."—*Horne*.

17. *Thine arrows* ; a poetical designation for flashes of lightning. Some suppose the Psalmist in this and the next verse refers to the manifestation of the Divine presence at Sinai ; but as the succeeding as well as the preceding verse relates to the passage through the Red Sea, that event is more

- 18 The voice of thy thunder *was* in the heaven :  
 The lightnings lightened the world :  
 The earth trembled and shook.
- 19 Thy way *is* in the sea,  
 And thy path in the great waters,  
 And thy footsteps are not known.
- 20 Thou leddest thy people like a flock  
 By the hand of Moses and Aaron.

## PSALM LXXVIII.

Maschil of Asaph [*or, A Psalm for Asaph to give instruction*].

Some suppose this Psalm was written on the occasion of the war between Judah and Israel, recorded in 2 Chronicles xv; others refer it to the events narrated in 2 Chronicles xv., xvi.; but the concluding verses are more in favour of the view thus maintained by Hengstenberg:—"That the Psalm, which in the title is called 'an instruction of Asaph,' belonged to the age of David, and was, therefore, composed by the *famous* Asaph, cannot be considered as doubtful, if we take a correct view of its contents. The last matters of fact on which the author touches, are the kingdom of David, and the settlement of the sanctuary on Zion." His "general object is to warn Israel, who had escaped the judgments of God, not to provoke a fresh judgment by a fresh apostasy. The conclusion (verses 65-72), however, indicates, that besides this general object the Psalmist designed to warn the Israelites against a special sin, to which they were peculiarly liable from the

probably the subject of the whole strophe, which represents the popular belief as to the means by which God troubled the host of the Egyptians (Exodus xiv. 24.), in accordance with which is the testimony of Josephus, who says,—“As soon as ever the whole Egyptian army was within it, the sea flowed to its own place and came down with a torrent, raised by storms of wind, and encompassed the Egyptians. Showers of rain also came down from the sky, and dreadful thunders and lightnings with flashes of fire. Thunderbolts also were darted upon them, nor was there anything which used to be sent by God upon men as indications of His wrath, which did not happen at this time, for a dark and dismal night oppressed them.”

19. This verse would stand better, as the rest of the passage, in the past tense: *Thy way was in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps were not known*; alluding to the return of the waters after the passage of the Israelites, obliterating all traces of it. “We have, therefore, here the consolation that God will lead us out of all our troubles; and that though they be ever so great, and deep, like the Red Sea, God will make a way through, contrary to all human reason and thoughts.”—*Arndt*.

circumstances of the times. The danger was that of not being willing to acquiesce in the Divine arrangement, by which the prerogative of Ephraim was transferred to Judah; of regarding that as a usurpation, which was in fact a Divine judgment; and of rebelling against the sanctuary in Zion, and the dominion of David and his tribe. The history renders it clear that this object was both an immediate and a very important one. The numerous, powerful, and haughty tribe of Ephraim had been in possession of precedence during the whole period of the Judges. The sanctuary in Shiloh was in the heart of it. How very determined were its claims for precedence appeared from its objections to Gideon (Judg. viii. 1), and its opposition to Jephthah—Judg. xii. 1. It became hence a matter of great difficulty for this tribe to acquiesce in the new arrangement of things under David. For seven years he was king over Judah alone. The success of the rebellion of Absalom may be attributed, to a very great extent, to the jealousy of Ephraim. Similar consequences followed the insurrection of Sheba, when the tribe of Judah only remained faithful to its king—2 Sam. xx. 2. Under David and Solomon, however, participation in that national glory, the foundation of which was laid by these powerful kings, counterbalanced the jealousy of Ephraim, and thus broke the energy of that tribe; but after Solomon's death it burst out into a violent flame; and the consequence of neglecting the warning of our Psalm was the melancholy division which inflicted a death wound on the Israelitish nation." The title, *Maschil*—*Instruction*, is very appropriate to the present Psalm, wherein the writer "resolves to recount the great deeds of the past for the instruction and warning of the people of God;" and not less so is its arrangement in connection with the preceding, taking up, as it does, and amplifying, the subject with which that terminates, and both concluding with the image of a shepherd and his flock. "The oracular announcement of the beginning," remarks Jebb, "is in the manner of Asaph the Seer, the author of Psalm i., and the composition is in the highest degree regular. After the exordium, which sets forth in general terms the establishment of God's covenant, and the rebellious spirit of those with whom it was made, the Prophet proceeds to mention in detail the various deliverances and the monitory chastisements of God, regularly alternated with a mention of their reiterated rebellions."

- 1 GIVE ear, O my people, *to my law* :  
Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
- 2 I will open my mouth in a parable :  
I will utter dark sayings of old :

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PSALM lxxviii. 1. *My law*, *i.e.*, my teaching or instruction, in which sense the word is also used in Proverbs i. 8, iii. 1, xiii. 14.

2. *Dark sayings of old*, *i.e.*, maxims or pointed sayings drawn from events of old time. Respecting the terms employed in this verse see on Psalm xlix. 4, to which may be added the following pertinent remark of Hengstenberg:—"The Psalmist does not designate as similitudes and riddles his remarks which follow merely as such, but the historical events which they expound to the people. These appellations are founded on the

- 3 Which we have heard and known,  
And our fathers have told us.
- 4 We will not hide *them* from their children,  
Showing to the generation to come  
The praises of the LORD, and his strength,  
And his wonderful works that he hath done.
- 5 For he established a testimony in Jacob,  
And appointed a law in Israel,  
Which he commanded our fathers,  
That they should make them known to their children :
- 6 That the generation to come might know *them*,  
*Even* the children *which* should be born ;  
*Who* should arise and declare *them* to their children :
- 7 That they might set their hope in God,  
And not forget the works of God ;  
But keep his commandments :
- 8 And might not be as their fathers,  
A stubborn and rebellious generation ;  
A generation *that* set not their heart aright,  
And whose spirit was not stedfast with God.
- 9 The children of Ephraim, *being* armed, and carrying bows,  
Turned back in the day of battle.

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fact that sacred history has in every part of it a concealed background of *instruction*, that it is a prophecy turned in the contrary direction, containing a fable or allegory under another name, and upon which are virtually written in legible characters the words, ' Whoso readeth let him understand'—compare Gal. iv. 24, and particularly 1 Cor. x. 6. These appellations moreover call upon us to separate the kernel from the shell, and to press out the wine of instruction from the grapes of history."

5. *That they should make them known, &c., i.e., not only the law and testimony just mentioned, but more especially, as the context indicates, the works of God, spoken of in verse 4.*

6. This verse may be rendered rather more closely, thus :—

That the generation to come might know them ;

That the children that should be born might arise and declare them to their children.

9. *The children of Ephraim being armed and carrying bows, or as the Seventy*

- 10 They kept not the covenant of God,  
And refused to walk in his law ;
- 11 And forgot his works,  
And his wonders that he had showed them.
- 12 Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers,  
In the land of Egypt, *in* the field of Zoan.
- 13 He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through ;  
And he made the waters to stand as an heap.
- 14 In the daytime also he led them with a cloud,  
And all the night with a light of fire.
- 15 He clave the rocks in the wilderness,  
And gave *them* drink as *out of* the great depths.
- 16 He brought streams also out of the rock,  
And caused waters to run down like rivers.
- 17 And they sinned yet more against him,  
By provoking the Most High in the wilderness.

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render it, *bending and shooting with the bow* ; the principal weapon in ancient warfare for distant fighting. The passage may refer to some incident in the conquest of Canaan, or during the times of the Judges ; or, as is more probable, it may be a figurative and proverbial expression for defection from the Divine commandments, or apostasy in the day of trial, as in verse 57, where a like metaphor is employed, but transferred from the *bowmen* to the *bow*. The *children of Ephraim* appear to stand here, not in contradistinction to the rest of Israel, but as representing the whole. "Ephraim," remarks Mendelssohn, "was a general term for Israel before the reigning of the house of David, because that Joshua, the first Judge, was of this tribe ; also, because its territory was in the region of Shiloh, and it is possible that because of the reputation of this tribe in those days, all those who were in high esteem were also called Ephraimites."

12. "Zoan, the ancient capital of the Pharaohs, where Moses wrought so many miracles, is rendered by the Chaldee *Tanis*, Septuagint *Tanis*, Vulgate *Tanis*, and Coptic *Tané*, from the Coptic *ten*,—*plain, flat, level* ; being situated on one of the eastern branches of the Nile, bearing its own name, near a large lake now called the lake of Menzala. There are ruins still remaining of the site of Zoan or Tanis, called San by the Arabs, comprising broken obelisks, capitals of the Corinthian order, a granite monument, &c."—*B.C.B.*

- 18 And they tempted God in their heart,  
By asking meat for their lust.
- 19 Yea, they spake against God ; they said,  
Can God furnish a table in the wilderness ?
- 20 Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out,  
And the streams overflowed ;  
Can he give bread also ?  
Can he provide flesh for his people ?
- 21 Therefore the LORD heard *this*, and was wroth :  
So a fire was kindled against Jacob,  
And anger also came up against Israel ;
- 22 Because they believed not in God,  
And trusted not in his salvation :
- 23 Though he had commanded the clouds from above,  
And opened the doors of heaven,
- 24 And had rained down manna upon them to eat,  
And had given them of the corn of heaven.
- 25 Man did eat angels' food :  
He sent them meat to the full.
- 26 He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven :  
And by his power he brought in the south wind.

18. *By asking meat for their lust, i.e., for the gratification of their appetite, not for the supply of their real wants, which God had provided for by giving them the manna.*

22. *And trusted not in his salvation, i.e., in his power to save.*

24, 25. *Man did eat angels' food.* The interpretation, *Every one did eat the bread of the mighty*, is usually adopted by modern expositors, and the word is not elsewhere applied to angels. It may, however, have that sense here; and this rendering which is that of all the old versions, or as the Chaldee paraphrases it, "food from the habitation of angels," forms the better parallelism with *the corn of heaven*, and is equally appropriate as a figurative designation of food miraculously supplied.

26. We read (Num. xi. 31) that "there went forth a wind from the Lord, and brought quails from the sea." A combination of the two winds here mentioned by the Psalmist, whose words may be regarded as a poetic mode of describing a south-east wind, would blow in a direction from the eastern branch of the Red Sea to Kibroth-hattâavah, the encampment of the Israelites, so named from the events referred to in this and the following verses.

- 27 He rained flesh also upon them as dust,  
And feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea :  
28 And he let *it* fall in the midst of their camp,  
Round about their habitations.  
29 So they did eat, and were well filled :  
For he gave them their own desire.  
30 They were not estranged from their lust.  
But while their meat was yet in their mouths,  
31 The wrath of God came upon them,  
And slew the fattest of them,  
And smote down the chosen *men* of Israel.  
32 For all this they sinned still,  
And believed not for his wondrous works.  
33 Therefore their days did he consume in vanity,  
And their years in trouble.  
34 When he slew them, then they sought him :  
And they returned and inquired early after God.  
35 And they remembered that God *was* their rock,  
And the high God their redeemer.

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30, 31. *They were not estranged from their lust ; or, they were still indulging their appetite.* They were not yet surfeited as Moses declared they should be (Num. xi. 20, where the word *loathsome* is from the same root as *estranged* here), but as expressed more particularly in the next line and nearly in the same words as in Num xi. 33 ; *While their meat was yet in their mouths the wrath of God came upon them and slew the fattest*, more literally, *the fat ones of them*,—those in full health and strength, and *smote down the chosen men*, or *young men*,—those in the prime and vigour of life, of Israel.

34. *When he slew them, &c.* After God had slain some of them, those who were left *enquired early*, or *sought diligently*, after God, as if they had been awakened by the smiting from a deep sleep, but, as declared in the next verses, their penitence was insincere or only transitory.

35. *God was their rock, &c.* "The strong God, the Most High, their Redeemer, or kinsman : that one who possessed the right of redemption ; the nearest akin to him who had forfeited his inheritance, as the word originally means, and hence is used for a redeemer, and here denotes Him who redeemed them from Egyptian bondage."—B.C.B.



- 36 Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth,  
And they lied unto him with their tongues.
- 37 For their heart was not right with him,  
Neither were they stedfast in his covenant.
- 38 But he, *being* full of compassion,  
Forgave *their* iniquity, and destroyed *them* not :  
Yea, many a time turned he his anger away,  
And did not stir up all his wrath.
- 39 For he remembered that they *were* but flesh ;  
A wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.
- 40 How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness,  
And grieve him in the desert !
- 41 Yea, they turned back and tempted God,  
And limited the Holy One of Israel.
- 42 They remembered not his hand,  
Nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy.
- 43 How he had wrought his signs in Egypt,  
And his wonders in the field of Zoan :
- 44 And had turned their rivers into blood ;  
And their floods, that they could not drink.

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36. *They did flatter him* ; rather, *they dissembled unto him* : for God is not susceptible of *flattery*, which implies the giving of undeserved praise, or deceiving by falsehood.

39. *A wind that passeth away, &c.*, " or, as the Hebrew may be rendered, *The spirit goeth away, and returneth not again.* To this purpose the Arabic : ' He remembered that they were flesh ; and a spirit which, when it departs, returneth not again.' "

40. *Provoke.* The marginal rendering, *rebel*, seems more correct.

41. *They turned back, or, returned.* The Hebrew verb, combined, as here, with another, expresses the repetition of an act : *Again and again they tempted God, and limited*, rather (as Septuagint and Vulgate), *provoked, the Holy One of Israel.*

43. The signs and wonders wrought in Egypt, to which the Psalmist had adverted in verse 12, he now proceeds to depict more at large, commencing with the first plague and ending with the last, but enumerating only four of the intermediate ones, and those not in the order of their occurrence.

- 45 He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them;  
 And frogs, which destroyed them.  
 46 He gave also their increase unto the caterpillar,  
 And their labour unto the locust.  
 47 He destroyed their vines with hail,  
 And their sycamore trees with frost.  
 48 He gave up their cattle also to the hail,  
 And their flocks to hot thunderbolts.  
 49 He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger,

45. *Divers sorts of flies.* The Hebrew is the same word as that employed by Moses in describing the plague (Ex. viii. 21, 24), and there rendered simply, *swarms of flies*. It is generally considered to denote the Egyptian dog-fly, but by some, a species of beetle, the *Blatta orientalis*, said by travellers to abound in the houses of Alexandria, to either of which the words of the Psalmist, *which devoured them*, are very appropriate. The former is described as about the size of a bee, as gorging itself with blood and flesh, and causing severe boils and pains, the terror of cattle as well as of wild beasts, the skin even of the camel, elephant, and rhinoceros, not being impenetrable to its punctures; and the latter, as not only biting men and animals, but devouring clothes, books, plants, and whatever comes in its way. *And frogs which destroyed them*; rather, *spoiled or corrupted them*, by their putrefaction, for "they gathered them together upon heaps, and the land stank."—Ex. viii. 14.

46. *The caterpillar.* The word does not occur in the history of the plagues, and probably denotes a species of locust. The verb from which it is derived is used (Deut. xxviii. 38) in reference to the feeding of the locust: "The locust shall consume them."

47, 48. In these verses the effects of the plague of hail on vegetation and on the flocks and herds are described. *Their sycamore trees.* "From the value of the sycamore in furnishing wood for various uses, from the grateful shade which its wide-spreading branches afforded, and on account of its fruit, which Mr. Maillet says the Egyptians held in the highest estimation, we may conceive somewhat of the loss they sustained when their vines were destroyed with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost."—B.C.B. *With frosts*; marginal, *great hailstones*. The Hebrew word occurs only here, and appears to be a poetical designation of hail, probably as explained by Fuerst, *globes of ice*.

48. This verse entirely accords with Ex. ix. 23, 24, where it is said, "The Lord sent thunders and hail, and the fire ran along the ground."

49. *Wrath, and indignation, and trouble.* The last word, as Bishop

- Wrath, and indignation, and trouble,  
 By sending evil angels *among them*.  
 50 He made a way to his anger ;  
 He spared not their souls from death,  
 But gave their life over to the pestilence ;  
 51 And smote all the firstborn in Egypt ;  
 The chief of *their* strength in the tabernacles of Ham :  
 52 But made his own people to go forth like sheep,  
 And guided them in the wilderness like a flock.  
 53 And he led them on safely, so that they feared not :  
 But the sea overwhelmed their enemies.  
 54 And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary,  
*Even to this mountain, which his right hand had purchased.*

Horsley remarks, unquestionably relates to the *sufferer's* state of mind, not the *punisher's*; and the two former may be rendered in accordance with it—*distraction, rage, and trouble, or distress*. By *sending evil angels*, or the inflictions of evil angels. Some take this, literally, as implying the actual appearance and ministration of evil spirits. "Tradition," observes Bishop Horne, "seems to have favoured this opinion, since the author of 'The Wisdom of Solomon' (chap. xvii.) describes the Egyptian darkness as a kind of temporary hell, in which there appeared to the wicked, whose consciences suggested to them everything that was horrible, 'a fire kindled of itself very dreadful. They were scared with beasts that passed by, and hissing of serpents, and they were vexed with monstrous apparitions, so that they fainted and died for fear; while over them was spread an heavy night, an image of that darkness which should afterwards receive them.'" The *evil angels*, or *messengers*, or *agents of evil* may, however, denote simply the material instruments of Divine displeasure exhibited during the whole scene, which the Psalmist now proceeds to close without specifying any other plague, except the last and most direful of all.

50. *But gave their life over to the pestilence*. This rendering suits the context better than the marginal, *beasts to the murrain*. The pestilence is not mentioned in the narrative as the means by which the death of the first-born was effected, but it is so in a general threatening conveyed by Moses to Pharaoh after the plague of murrain (Ex. ix. 15), and may be indicated by the destroyer—Ex. xii. 23.

51. *The chief of their strength*; a phrase, particularly in poetry, for the *first-born*, to which it forms a parallel here and in Gen. xlix. 3, as explained in Deut. xxi. 17. See also Psalm cv. 36.

- 55 He cast out the heathen also before them,  
And divided them an inheritance by line,  
And made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.
- 56 Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God,  
And kept not his testimonies :
- 57 But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers :  
They were turned aside like a deceitful bow.
- 58 For they provoked him to anger with their high places,  
And moved him to jealousy with their graven images.
- 59 When God heard *this*, he was wroth,  
And greatly abhorred Israel :
- 60 So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh,  
The tent *which* he placed among men ;
- 61 And delivered his strength into captivity,  
And his glory into the enemy's hand.
- 62 He gave his people over also unto the sword ;  
And was wroth with his inheritance.

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56-54. "In these verses the representation of the rebelliousness of the Israelites is continued during the period of the Judges, and attention is directed to the Divine judgments which overtook them as they had overtaken their fathers in a former age."—*Hengstenberg*.

57. *They were turned aside like a deceitful, or slack, bow*, which disappoints the trust placed in it by failing to emit the arrow aright ; or, as Boothroyd renders it, like a bow unstrung, which returns to the natural tendency of the wood.

58. The Psalmist having remarked that the succeeding generation dealt unfaithfully like their fathers, describes their idolatries in nearly the same words as Moses had those of their fathers—Deut. xxxii. 16. 17.

60. "That God did forsake His sanctuary in Shiloh, so that it became like a dead carcase without a soul, was visibly demonstrated to all men by the catastrophe described in the following verses, and more especially when the ark of the covenant actually came into the hands of the Philistines. It was not brought back to that place, and the holy tabernacle was removed from thence, first to Nob (see 1 Sam. xxi. 1, 4, 6), and after the destruction of that city by Saul, to Gibeon—1 Kings iii. 4."

61. "The ark is called the *strength* of God, because it was the pledge of the manifestation of His power on behalf of Israel, and as it were its seat and fountain."—*Hengstenberg*. See on Psalm lxxxv. 9.

- 63 The fire consumed their young men ;  
And their maidens were not given to marriage.
- 64 Their priests fell by the sword ;  
And their widows made no lamentation.
- 65 Then the LORD awaked as one out of sleep,  
And like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine.
- 66 And he smote his enemies in the hinder part :  
He put them to a perpetual reproach.
- 67 Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph,  
And chose not the tribe of Ephraim :

63, 64. *The fire consumed their young men, i.e., "the fire of battle, compare Num. xxi. 28."*—Hengstenberg. *And their maidens were not given to marriage.* Several of the old translators render, *did not mourn*, thus making an exact parallelism with the next verse. *They were not praised*, seems, however, more in accordance with the form of the Hebrew verb ; but whether it has the particular sense assigned to it in our version, "*were not celebrated by an epithalamium or nuptial song*" (B.C.B.) is doubtful. A more general sense, however, *were not spoken of with approbation*, or, *were disregarded*, suits the passage, the import of which is, that survivors were so absorbed by their own more immediate troubles, or the public calamities, that the ordinary usages of society and the ceremonies of lamentation for the dead, were neglected. The Psalmist refers to the death of the two sons of Eli, the tidings of which, and the capture of the ark, were the immediate cause of that of their father, and of the premature labour and death of the wife of Phinehas—1 Sam. iv. 11—22.

65, 66. "In the song of Moses, it is said to be the way of God, that He first punishes the sins of His people, and then delivers them out of the oppressive power of the instruments of His punishment."—Hengstenberg. The Psalmist here announces a like course of proceeding in reference to events narrated in the books of Judges and Samuel ; and, as customary with the sacred writers, describing the actions of the Deity after the manner of men, represents Him as a warrior rising to renewed action after the refreshment of sleep, and further stimulated by the exhilaration of wine. *He smote his enemies in the hinder part.* This is commonly supposed to refer to the disease with which the Philistines were affected (1 Sam. v. 6) ; but a more general sense seems preferable, that of putting to flight, of which a wound *in the hinder part* is a sure indication ; and it may indeed be rendered, perhaps more correctly, *He smote back, or repulsed, his enemies.*

67. *He refused the tabernacle of Joseph, &c.* He refused to restore to Shiloh, which belonged to the tribe of Ephraim, one of the sons of Joseph,

- 68 But chose the tribe of Judah,  
The mount Zion which he loved.  
69 And he built his sanctuary like high *palaces*,  
Like the earth which he hath established for ever.  
70 He chose David also his servant,  
And took him from the sheepfolds :  
71 From following the ewes great with young  
He brought him to feed Jacob his people,  
And Israel his inheritance.  
72 So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart ;  
And guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.

PSALM LXXIX.

A Psalm of [*or, for*] Asaph.

This Psalm bears a strong resemblance to Psalm lxxiv. and both were in all probability composed on the same occasion, the former dwelling more

its distinction as the depository of the ark and sanctuary ; or to that tribe the pre-eminence which it had formerly enjoyed.

69. *He built his sanctuary like high palaces.* The Hebrew is simply *height*, which may signify either *high palaces, fortresses, or mountains.* The latter best suits with the next line, *Like the earth which he hath established for ever ;* or rather, *He established it as the earth for ever.* The Psalmist “refers to the glory and spiritual excellence of the sanctuary on Zion, and its unchangeableness, in opposition to Shiloh, from which it was removed. He has no anticipation of an impending destruction of the temple, foretold as it was by the oldest of the prophets. Still, this is not excluded by the expression used, for even the eternity of *the earth* is not absolute.”

70. “Instances of this kind are not wanting in Greek and Roman history. Croesus said that Gyges, who was the first king of the Mermnadæ, who reigned in Lydia, was a slave, and rose to sovereignty, succeeding his predecessor, of whose sheep he had been the pastor.”—*B. C. B.*

71. *The ewes great with young.* Whether this is the sense of the Hebrew word or *those that give suck, or the young lambs, the sucklings* themselves, is doubtful ; but in either case it refers to a part of the flock requiring the particular attention and tender care of the shepherd.

72. *So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart, &c.* “And David executed judgment and justice unto all his people.”—2 Sam. viii. 15. “Serve therefore this king whom God hath given you with faithfulness ; come together under His shepherd’s rod to the sanctuary of Zion, and do not revolt like your fathers ; this is the concluding fundamental tone of the whole Psalm.”—*Hengstenberg.*

particularly on the destruction of the temple, the present on that of the city and people. Some refer it to the Antiochian persecution, but there are decisive objections to this view, similar to those adduced in the former instance, particularly the representation it gives of Jerusalem in ruins, which is not suitable to the times of the Maccabees; and the mention of nations and kingdoms (verse 6), which accords with 2 Kings xxiv. 2, where we read that the Lord sent bands of the Chaldees, Syrians, Moabites, and Ammonites against Judah to destroy it, shortly before the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar; whereas in the time of the Maccabees, Judah had to do only with a single kingdom. Verse 3 is quoted in 1 Mac. vii. 17, as applicable to the circumstances there narrated, as might be done with any other portion of Scripture. Verses 6 and 7 are with slight variations the same as Jer. x. 25, and "for this reason," remarks Mendelssohn, "some writers affirm that this prophet composed the Psalm before us, and that he composed it after the manner of the songs of Asaph;" but one writer may have quoted the passage from the other as adapted to his purpose. The Psalm bears the marks of being the original, as more closely and essentially connected with the context; and though the prophecy of Jeremiah, with which it stands associated, appears to have been delivered before the destruction of Jerusalem, it was probably not written in the form in which we now find it till afterwards.

- 1 O GOD, the heathen are come into thine inheritance ;  
Thy holy temple have they defiled ;  
They have laid Jerusalem on heaps.
- 2 The dead bodies of thy servants have they given  
To be meat unto the fowls of the heaven,  
The flesh of thy saints  
Unto the beasts of the earth.
- 3 Their blood have they shed like water  
Round about Jerusalem ;  
And *there was* none to bury *them*.
- 4 We are become a reproach to our neighbours,  
A scorn and derision to them that are round about us.

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PSALM lxxix. 1. *On heaps, or ruins.* The Seventy render rather strangely, "for a storehouse of fruit," and the Vulgate following them, "for the keeping of apples."

2, 3. "Either there was no friend or relation left to bury them, or none was allowed to perform that last sad office."—*B.C.B.* The expression, *there was none to bury them*, may simply indicate a want of leisure or opportunity on the part of survivors to bury the numbers of slain, rather than a prohibition by their conquerors.

4. "The Idumeans, Philistines, Phenicians, Ammonites, and Moabites, all gloried in the subjugation of this people, and their insults to them were mixed with blasphemies against God."—*A. Clarke.* See Psalm cxxvii. 7.

- 5 How long, LORD ? wilt thou be angry for ever ?  
Shall thy jealousy burn like fire ?
- 6 Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee,  
And upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.
- 7 For they have devoured Jacob,  
And laid waste his dwelling place.
- 8 Oh remember not against us former iniquities :  
Let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us :  
For we are brought very low.
- 9 Help us, O God of our salvation,  
For the glory of thy name :  
And deliver us, and purge away our sins,  
For thy name's sake.
- 10 Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God ?

5. This verse may be better punctuated thus:—

How long Lord wilt thou be angry ?—for ever ?  
Shall thy jealousy burn like fire ? or,  
How long Lord wilt thou be angry ?  
Shall thy jealousy burn for ever like fire ?

6. "The heathen and kingdoms are not the heathen nations generally, but those who had risen up against Israel. The prayer rests upon what God does constantly. Judgment begins at the house of God, but it proceeds thence to those whom God has employed as the instruments of His punishment."—Hengstenberg.

7. *His dwelling place*, or, *pasture*; the latter "is better. They eat up Israel, the poor flock, and devour his pasture, his land."—Hengstenberg.

8. *Former iniquities*, or, as in the margin, *the iniquities of them that were before us, our ancestors*, as in Lev. xxvi. 45: "The covenant of their ancestors." See also the previous verses from verse 39. "God does not remember the *sins* of their ancestors, but according to His promise the *covenant* He made with them. They desire that they may not be treated according to verse 39, but according to verse 45. It is the uniform doctrine of Scripture that no one is punished unless personally guilty, and that it is only in the ungodly children that the sin of the fathers, which is represented as increased in them, is punished."—Hengstenberg. *Prevent us*; see on Psalm xxi. 3.



Let him be known among the heathen in our sight  
By the revenging of the blood of thy servants *which is shed*.

11 Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee :

According to the greatness of thy power

Preserve thou those that are appointed to die ;

12 And render unto our neighbours

Sevenfold into their bosom

Their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee,

O LORD.

13 So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture

Will give thee thanks for ever :

We will show forth thy praise to all generations.

#### PSALM LXXX.

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim-Eduth. A Psalm of [or, for] Asaph.

*Shoshannim-Eduth* ; see on Psalm xlv. The Septuagint adds to the title:—"respecting the Assyrian;" which may refer either to the invasion of Sennacherib or to the captivity of the ten tribes by Shalmaneser, to which some apply the Psalm, and consider the absence of any mention of Judah or Jerusalem determines its reference to the kingdom of Israel apart from that of Judah. But this reasoning is not conclusive, as verse 2 mentions the tribe of Benjamin, which, in part, if not entirely, adhered to Judah. There is nothing to fix the particular occasion of the Psalm ; but its language, while indicating deep distress, does not appear to depict such a scene of desolation and ruin as the preceding and Psalm lxxiv. The nation is "cast down, but not destroyed," the *vine* is still standing in its own soil, though plucked and wasted, and some of its branches devoured or burned ; and, if the title is coeval with the Psalm itself, the inscription, *To the chief musician*, which is wanting in Psalms lxxiv. and lxxix., represents the

10. *Let him be known, &c.*; rather, *Let the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed be known among the heathen in our sight*.

11. "The whole people," remarks Hengstenberg, "appears under the image of a prisoner," but the Psalmist in this verse may allude particularly to the captive monarch, bound in fetters of brass, and his eyes put out ; and the chief men of the city, the *children of death* (marginal reading), awaiting the judgment of the king of Babylon at Riblah, where they were eventually slain.—See 2 Kings xxv. 7, 18—21.

12. *Into their bosom*. This expression alludes to the eastern style of dress ; the long flowing garments being girdled round the waist, the part above serves the purpose of a pocket or bag.

temple service as still maintained. The Psalm consists of three parts; the first (verses 1-3), an invocation for help for an afflicted people; the second (verses 4-7), a mournful statement of their calamities; the third (verses 8-19), a further representation of them, amplified and adorned with the metaphor of a vine; each containing a prayer for deliverance, and concluding with the fundamental thought, or burden of the poem, *Turn us again, and cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved*; but increasing in intensity of address with every recurrence. The first is simply, *O God*; the second, *O God of Hosts*; the third, *O Jehovah, God of Hosts*. The Seventy insert *Selah* at verse 7, where the principal division takes place.

- 1 GIVE ear, O Shepherd of Israel,  
Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock;  
Thou that dwellest *between* the cherubim, shine forth.
- 2 Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh  
Stir up thy strength, and come *and* save us.
- 3 Turn us again, O God,  
And cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.
- 4 O LORD God of hosts,  
How long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy  
people?
- 5 Thou feedest them with the bread of tears;  
And givest them tears to drink in great measure.

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PSALM LXXX. 1. *Thou that leadest*: rather, *leddest*, for this and the next verse appear to allude to the journeyings through the wilderness. *Joseph*, the most distinguished of Jacob's sons, is here put for his posterity generally, answering to *Israel* in the previous line. "In the next clause prominence is given to the omnipotence of God, as the second foundation for the deliverance, just as in the first, His care for His people had been especially dwelt upon. The cherubim of the sanctuary were the emblem of the earthly creation, God's sitting enthroned above these indicates that this sublunary world with all its powers is subject to Him and serves Him."—*Hengstenberg*.

2. The three tribes mentioned in this verse, "marched in the wilderness immediately after the ark and cherubim, by Divine appointment, to which this appears to be an allusion."—*B.C.B.*

3. *Turn us again*, *i.e.*, to thy favour and to prosperity; or, if the Psalmist refers to any part of the people having been carried into captivity, it may be taken more literally, *Bring us back from thence*.

4. *How long wilt thou be angry against*, *i.e.*, notwithstanding, *the prayer of thy people*, and refuse to answer it? "How long wilt thou be wroth with a supplicating people?"—*Geddes*.

- 6 Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours :  
And our enemies laugh among themselves.
- 7 Turn us, again, O God of hosts,  
And cause thy face to shine ; and we shall be saved.
- 8 Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt :  
Thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.
- 9 Thou preparedst room before it,  
And didst cause it to take deep root,  
And it filled the land.
- 10 The hills were covered with the shadow of it,  
And the boughs thereof *were like* the goodly cedars.

6. *Thou makest us a strife, i.e., an object of contention for our spoils. Our enemies laugh among themselves.* The Hebrew text, as it stands, hardly admits of this sense, and the old versions indicate probably the genuine reading, being a change of one letter : *Our enemies laugh at us, or, hold us in derision.* How strikingly has the former part of this verse, no less than the latter, been exemplified from age to age. In the later period of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, this people became the strife and prey of their neighbours, the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Chaldeans ; and after their return from Babylon, where they had passed with their conquerors under the yoke of the Medes and Persians, having been wrested from *their* grasp with their whole empire by the Macedonian conqueror, they continued the strife and prey of his successors on the thrones of Egypt and Syria, till, after a short interval of independence, they were absorbed in the vortex of all-victorious Rome. After the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews by the Romans, and the subsequent subversion of the Roman empire, their country, and especially the site of its ancient metropolis, became the object of fierce contention to the Persians, the Saracens, the Turks, and the various states of Christendom. Witness the crusades of the middle ages, and the *strife* now subsisting in words at least between the emperors of Russia and Turkey, in which an alleged breach of faith on the part of the latter respecting the custody of the "holy places" at Jerusalem, is made the chief pretext for a quarrel which is at this moment (July, 1853) threatening to embroil Europe in a general war.

8. The verbs in this verse, referring to a distant event, would be better in the imperfect tense : *Thou broughtest, &c.*, as in the three following verses.

9. *Thou preparedst room before it ; rather, preparedst the ground for it.*

10. The ellipsis in the second line should be supplied by understanding the verb from the first, as it is by the old translators :—

The hills were covered with its shadow ;

And the lofty cedars (literally, cedars of God) by its branches.

- 11 She sent out her boughs unto the sea,  
And her branches unto the river.  
12 Why hast thou *then* broken down her hedges,  
So that all they which pass by the way do pluck her ?  
13 The boar out of the wood doth waste it,  
And the wild beast of the field doth devour it.  
14 Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts :  
Look down from heaven,  
And behold, and visit this vine ;

The vine which in Judea attained to great extent and luxuriance, requires artificial support, or that of another tree, a common mode of training it in the east.—See *Burder's Oriental Literature*. Merriok has well paraphrased this line :—

“ Her branches, towering to the skies,  
With healthful stem conspicuous rise ;  
And round the cedar's loftiest boughs,  
Her covering veil intertwined she throws.”

And Milton, in describing the employments of our first parents in Paradise, makes a similar allusion :—

“ Or they led the Vine  
To wed her Elm ; she, spoused, about him twines  
Her marriageable arms, and with him brings  
Her dower, the adopted clusters, to adorn  
His barren leaves.”—*Paradise Lost*, book 5, l. 215.

11. *She sent out her boughs unto the sea, the Mediterranean, and her branches, or shoots, unto the river, the Euphrates.* In these two verses the Psalmist describes the boundaries of the territory promised to Israel (Deut. xi. 24) ; the cedar here answering to the “ Lebanon ” of Moses, the northern limit, and the hills to “ the wilderness,” the hilly and wilderness district of Judah, on the south. *Boughs* would be better rendered *branches* in this or verse 10, the Hebrew word not being the same in both. *Branches*. The Hebrew signifies properly *young shoots*.

12, 13, “ The wild boar, *chazir*, is the parent stock of our domestic hog.”—B.C.B. “ Wild hogs,” remarks Roberts, “ are exceedingly numerous and destructive in the East, and will destroy a fine garden or vineyard in one night. The herd led on by old boars will go round till they find a weak place in the fence, and then all rush in and not only devour the fruit, but turn up roots, break branches, and lacerate the stems with their tusks.” See also *Kitto's Illustrated Commentary*.

- 15 And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted,  
And the branch *that* thou madest strong for thyself.
- 16 *It is* burned with fire, *it is* cut down :  
They perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.
- 17 Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand,  
Upon the son of man *whom* thou madest strong for thyself.
- 18 So will not we go back from thee :  
Quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.
- 19 Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts,  
Cause thy face to shine ; and we shall be saved.

## PSALM LXXXI.

To the chief Musician upon Gittith. A Psalm of [or, for] Asaph.

*Gittith* ; see on Psalm viii. There is nothing in the contents of this Psalm

15, 17. *The vineyard.* The precise meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. Some construe it as a verb, *Establish*, or *protect*, *that which*, &c., but a noun suits the place better, and the best rendering seems to be *the plant* not *the vineyard*, as the metaphor is confined to a single vine. In reference to *the plant*, the *son* or *son of man*, as the Hebrew is rendered in the next line in some MSS., may naturally denote *the branch*, as *daughters* in Genesis xlix. 22. The reading, *son of man*, has probably been inserted by a copyist from verse 17, which may be regarded as an explanation of this, the metaphor of the vine being there dropped. However applicable the words may be in a pre-eminent sense to the Messiah, the Psalmist had doubtless a direct reference to the circumstances of his own times. The phrase *son of man* does not of itself in the Old Testament bear a distinctive character, but is used, like *man*, simply for mankind at large, or for any individual. *The son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself* answers to the *man of thy right hand* in the previous line, which is nearly identical with *Benjamin, son of the right hand* (see Gen. xxxv. 18, and Deut. xxxiii. 12), denoting one on whom God bestows especial favour or distinction ; and may refer to the reigning king, or to David's royal line, thus embracing both the immediate and the more distant and higher view. *Let thy hand be* is equivalent to *strengthen, protect, and preserve*. The phraseology appears to be derived from the Eastern mode of sitting at meals ; the most honourable being placed at the right hand, and in the intervals between the dishes, reclining on the bosom of the master of the feast, whose hand would naturally be placed on his shoulder or side in token of regard.—See John xiii. 23, 25.

16. *They perish*, or *let them* (the spoilers of thy vine) *perish*.

18. *So will not we go back from thee.* This promise, so far as regards a relapse into idolatry, was faithfully kept by the Jews after their captivity. *Quicken us, i.e., make us live, revive us.* See on Psalm lv. 15.

indicating any particular date. It may have been composed by the Asaph of David's reign, and it is most probable from verse 3 that it was designed for the feast of trumpets, on which occasion it is still used by the Jews. It is divided by *Selah* (verse 7), into two principal parts, each consisting of three distinct stanzas or subjects. The first part opens with a call to the people, or to the Levites, to celebrate the festival (verses 1-3); declares its Divine institution (verses 4, 5); and alludes to the acts of Divine mercy connected therewith (verses 6, 7). The second part opens with an epitome of the first table of the Law delivered on Mount Sinai, with the promise annexed to its fulfilment (verses 8-10); declares the people's disobedience, and its lamentable consequences (verses 11, 12); and contrasts them, in conclusion, with the happy effects which would have resulted from their obedience—verses 13-16.

- 1 SING aloud unto God our strength :  
Make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.
- 2 Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel,  
The pleasant harp with the psaltery.
- 3 Blow up the trumpet in the new moon,  
In the time appointed, on our solemn feast day.

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PSALM lxxxi. 2. *Take, bring hither.* The Hebrew words signify to *lift up* and to *give*, frequently in reference to the *voice* or a *sound*; which appears to be their sense here: *Raise the psalm, sound the timbrel, the sweet toned harp with the psaltery.*

3. *The new moon, i.e.,* the first day of the month, the Jewish months being lunar. The first day of Tisri, the seventh month of the sacred, but the first of the civil year, and nearly corresponding with our ninth, was celebrated by the feast of trumpets, the only festival occurring at the beginning of a month. No particular reason is stated for its institution (Lev. xxiii. 24, Numb. xxix. 1); but the present passage in connection with verses 7-10 favours the supposition that its design, besides that of ushering in the new year, was to commemorate the promulgation of the Law, the solemnities of which were proclaimed by "the voice of the trumpet."—Exodus xix. 16. The exact meaning of the word in the next line rendered *time appointed*, is uncertain, but it may be derived from the root to *cover* and be nearly synonymous with *new moon*, referring to the period immediately preceding, when the orb is wholly obscured. Some take it in the opposite sense, when the moon is covered with light, and refer the clause to the passover or feast of tabernacles, which were celebrated at the full moon. This is supported by the Syriac use of the word; but the former seems more in accordance with the idea of *covering*. The previous word sometimes denotes the whole month, and is so understood by some here. So the Targum, which renders the verse: "Blow the trumpet in the month Tisri, the month covered by our solemn feasts;" the day of atonement and the feast of tabernacles being also solemnized in this month.

- 4 For this was a statute for Israel,  
And a law of the God of Jacob.
- 5 This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony,  
When he went out through the land of Egypt :  
Where I heard a language that I understood not.
- 6 I removed his shoulder from the burden :  
His hands were delivered from the pots.
- 7 Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee ;  
I answered thee in the secret place of thunder :  
I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah.

4. *A law of the God of Jacob.* The Hebrew as in the preceding line is *for*, i.e., in honour of.

5. *Joseph* is here, as in verse 1 of the preceding Psalm, put for *Israel*, and very appropriately so, as both passages refer to events connected with the sojourn in Egypt, where Jacob's family were indebted to Joseph's elevation for all the favours they enjoyed; and the oppression of their descendants arose from "a new king who had not known" him. *When he went out through*, or, as in the margin, *against*, but more correctly *over*, *the land of Egypt*; alluding probably to the triumphant manner of their departure, when "the children of Israel went out with a high hand before all the Egyptians"—Ex. xiv. 8, Num. xxxiii. 3. *I heard a language which I understood not.* "All the versions, except the Chaldee, read in the third person instead of the first: *He* heard a language which he understood not."—B.C.B. This is by some supposed to refer to the voice of God by Moses, announcing their approaching deliverance; but the expression more properly indicates a foreign tongue, and the best commentary may be found in Psalm cxiv. 1.

6. A change of person here takes place, and God is introduced as addressing his people to the end of the Psalm. The precise meaning of the word rendered *pots* is uncertain, but it no doubt alludes to some utensil connected with the servitude of the people, "or rather, as *dood* also signifies, the *basket*: so the Seventy and others render; and Diodati, 'his hands were removed from the *baskets*, i.e., from carrying earth to make bricks.'"—B.C.B. Baskets of this kind are said to have been found in the sepulchral vaults opened at Thebes. The Hebrew is quite a different word from that rendered *pots* in Psalm lxxviii. 13.

7. *I answered thee in the secret place of thunder*, or, *in the covert of the thunder cloud*. Some refer this line to the deliverance of Israel in the passage through the Red Sea, when "the Lord troubled the host of the Egyptians," from "the pillar of fire and of the cloud" (Ex. xiv. 24); but

- 8 Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee :  
O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me ;
- 9 There shall no strange god be in thee ;  
Neither shalt thou worship any strange god.
- 10 I *am* the LORD thy God,  
Which brought thee out of the land of Egypt :  
Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.
- 11 But my people would not hearken to my voice :  
And Israel would none of me.
- 12 So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust :  
And they walked in their own counsels.
- 13 Oh that my people had hearkened unto me,  
And Israel had walked in my ways !
- 14 I should soon have subdued their enemies,  
And turned mine hand against their adversaries.

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it seems more appropriate to the Divine manifestations on the giving of the Law "from the secret top of Oreb or of Sinai," as Milton phrases it, especially as the succeeding verses contain the essential and fundamental principle of the precepts there delivered. *I proved thee at the waters of Meribah.* The Israelites were there severely put to the proof; and Moses and Aaron, by their impatience on that occasion, forfeited the privilege of conducting them into the promised land.

9. *Strange god.* The Hebrew word is not the same in both lines, and the variation may be preserved by rendering, *There shall no other god be in thee, neither shalt thou worship any strange god.*

10. *Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.* The Chaldee paraphrases thus: "Open thy mouth to the words of the Law, and I will fill it with all good;" but the words should be taken in a more general sense; "I am rich for all thy necessities, even for thy holdest wishes." —*Hengstenberg.* The expression is proverbial in the East, as it is with us, to a certain extent, for making large requests. Some suppose it to have been derived from the manner in which young birds instinctively open their mouths to be fed, but it may have originated simply in the common act of taking food; or more particularly in the custom existing in some countries for an entertainer to testify his regard for a guest by filling his mouth with choice morsels.

11. *Israel would none of me.* *Would* is so seldom used except as an auxiliary verb, that the expression here may appear defective, but it must be taken as the past tense of the primary verb *to will*: literally, *Israel willed not me*; were disinclined to and disregarded me.



15 The haters of the LORD should have submitted themselves unto him :

But their time should have endured for ever.

16 He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat :  
And with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee.

### PSALM LXXXII.

A Psalm of [*or, for*] Asaph.

"Some refer this Psalm to the time of David, and others to that of Hezekiah, but it is more probable that it was composed when Jehoshaphat reformed the courts throughout his kingdom—2 Chron. xix. 6, 7."—*B.C.E.* "God appears in the midst of His Church, for judgment upon the gods of the earth, the judges who bear his image ; reproves them for their violation of justice, and passes sentence upon them."—*Hengstenberg ab.*

1 GOD standeth in the congregation of the mighty ;  
He judgeth among the gods.

13-16. "How much does this paternal solicitude resemble that which our blessed Lord so touchingly expressed for Jerusalem !—Matt. xxiii. 37."—*Phillips.*

15. "It was the design to give great prominence to the thought so comforting for Israel, and so well fitted to lead them to reconciliation with God, that their enemies are also the enemies of God, which led to the expression *the haters of the Lord* instead of *my haters*. The use of the third person in the next clause is connected with this."—*Hengstenberg.* But *their time should have endured for ever, i.e.,* their prosperity should have known no end.

16. "God would make their land so productive, that there should be no rock so hard or barren but that He would cause it to contribute to their means of subsistence."—*Phillips.*

PSALM lxxxii. 1. The correct rendering appears to be, *God standeth in the assembly of God, He judgeth among the judges.* The phraseology of the first line, *God standeth in the assembly of God*, that is, *in His own assembly*, may be illustrated by a reference to the legal institutions of our own country. "The Court of King's Bench is properly the place where the king presides, and where he is supposed to be always present. James I. sometimes attended ; at such times it might be said, The King is in the King's court."—*A. Clarke.* By the congregation or assembly of God "is understood a judicial court, in which God is said, in a certain sense, to preside," as Jehoshaphat "said to the judges, Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment."—2 Chron. xix. 6. The term *gods* appears to be applied to judges and magistrates, as persons commissioned by God to administer justice in His name. The word *saying* is to be understood at the end of this verse, the three following being the admonition of God to the corrupt judges.

- 2 How long will ye judge unjustly,  
And accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.
- 3 Defend the poor and fatherless :  
Do justice to the afflicted and needy.
- 4 Deliver the poor and needy :  
Rid *them* out of the hand of the wicked.
- 5 They know not, neither will they understand ;  
They walk on in darkness :  
All the foundations of the earth are out of course.
- 6 I have said, Ye *are* gods ;  
And all of you *are* children of the Most High.
- 7 But ye shall die like men,  
And fall like one of the princes.
- 8 Arise, O God, judge the earth :  
For thou shalt inherit all nations.

PSALM LXXXIII.

A Song or Psalm of [*or, for*] Asaph.

Some refer this Psalm to the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar ; but it appears to be most appropriately referred to the confederacy against Jehoshaphat.—2 Chron.,xx. "Here, as on that occasion, the same nations on the whole meet us. The Edomites, the Moabites, and the Ammonites, whom alone the author of Chronicles expressly names, are not only mentioned in this Psalm, but are also introduced as those with whom the whole enterprise originated. The others are grouped around these three, and, at the conclusion, the sons of Lot are expressly named as the instigators. Even the narrative in Chronicles decidedly indicates that these three were named merely as the *centre* of the undertaking, and that there were others concerned of less note, the mention of whom was not a matter of such con-

5. *They know not*, that is, the judges know not. *All the foundations, &c.* "All the civil institutions of the land totter."—*B.C.B.* This verse may be taken as the words of the Psalmist introducing the definitive sentence pronounced by God upon the corrupt judges in verses 6, 7, where they are again styled *gods* by virtue of their office, but assured nevertheless that they *should die like* the meanest individuals, and *fall like princes* from their elevated position.

8. The Psalmist, in conclusion, invokes God to arise and judge the earth, and take the cause of the oppressed into His own hand ; all nations being His inheritance as their common Creator.

sequence to the historian as to the Psalmist, whose object was promoted by a heaping up of names."—*Hengstenberg*. The title ascribes the Psalm to Asaph, and we read in 2 Chron. xx. 14–17, that Jahaziel, of the family of Asaph, was inspired to predict the extraordinary defeat of the confederacy, who it is supposed, with great appearance of probability, may also have composed the Psalm. On *Song or Psalm*, see on Psalm xlviii.

- 1 KEEP not thou silence, O God :  
Hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.
- 2 For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult :  
And they that hate thee have lifted up the head.
- 3 They have taken crafty counsel against thy people,  
And consulted against thy hidden ones.
- 4 They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from *being* a nation ;  
That the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.
- 5 For they have consulted together with one consent :  
They are confederate against thee :
- 6 The tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites ;  
Of Moab, and the Hagarenes ;
- 7 Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek ;  
The Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre ;
- 8 Assur also is joined with them :  
They have holpen the children of Lot. Selah.

PSALM lxxxiii. 3. *Thy hidden ones*. "The expression is similar in force to the passages (Psalms xxvii. 5, and xxxi. 20) alluding to the custom which prevails, especially in eastern countries, of shewing kindness and hospitality to strangers, of taking them into the house, and manifesting for their comfort as much concern as for the most valued treasures."—*Phillips*.

5. The Hebrew is very emphatic, literally *They have consulted, they have joined heart together*. "The heart, with the whole fulness of its purposes, plans, and wickedness, is engaged in the matter."—*Hengstenberg*.

6. *Tabernacles*. "Tents are mentioned, because it was the custom of these people, especially the Ishmaelites, to live a migratory or wandering life, a custom retained by their descendants to the present day."—*B.C.B. Hagarenes*, probably descendants of Hagar, in which sense the appellation would comprehend *all* the Ishmaelites ; but, as it appears to be here used in contradistinction, it may have been confined to a particular tribe. They are supposed to have lived to the east of Gilead.—See 1 Chron. v. 19, 20.

7, 8. *Gebal*. "From being united with Ammon it is probable that these were not the Gibletes (1 Kings v. 18, marg.), or inhabitants of Gebal

- 9 Do unto them as *unto* the Midianites ;  
As to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook of Kison :
- 10 Which perished at En-dor :  
They became as dung for the earth.
- 11 Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb :  
Yea, all their princes as Zebah, and as Zalmunna :
- 12 Who said, Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in  
possession.
- 13 O my God, make them like a wheel ;  
As the stubble before the wind.
- 14 As the fire burneth a wood,  
And as the flame setteth the mountains on fire ;
- 15 So persecute them with thy tempest,  
And make them afraid with thy storm.

on the Mediterranean, but the inhabitants of the northern part of Seir or Edom, now called Djebel, and mentioned by Burckhardt."—*B.C.B. Holpen*, Hebrew *been an arm to, the children of Lot*, i.e., the Moabites and Ammonites mentioned above, who appear to have been "the proper instigators and firebrands of the war."—*Hengstenberg*.

9-11. "From the many examples of Divine judgment upon enemies, which constituted pledges of deliverance in this trouble, the Psalmist selects two, the victory over the Canaanites (Judg. iv. and v.) ; and that of Gideon over the Ammonites,—chap. vii. and viii. He begins with the latter as the more glorious of the two ; but in expanding the subject of the ninth verse in the two following, the order is reversed ; verse 10 is an appendage to the second clause, verse 9 : verse 11 expands the first."—*Hengstenberg*. *En-dor* is not mentioned in the book of Judges ; but it was contiguous to Taanach and Megiddo, where the song of Deborah describes the battle to have been fought. *Oreb* and *Zeeb* were princes of the Midianites, and *Zebah* and *Zalmunna*, kings.—See Judges vii. 25, viii. 5.

12. *The houses of God*. Not merely the sanctuary, or Jerusalem, but all other places in which God was worshipped, or, in a still more general sense, the habitations, or whole inheritance of His people, as in the prayer of Jehoshaphat—2 Chron. xx. 11.

13. *Like a wheel* ; "rather *whirl*, as Bishop Lowth renders *galgal*, any light thing that is whirled and driven about by the wind, as thistledown.—See Isaiah xvii. 13."—*B.C.B.*

14. "In uncultivated countries it is a usual practice to set the woods on fire, as the first step towards clearing the land."—*B.C.B.*

- 16 Fill their faces with shame ;  
 That they may seek thy name, O LORD.  
 17 Let them be confounded and troubled for ever ;  
 Yea, let them be put to shame, and perish :  
 18 That *men* may know that thou,  
 Whose name alone is JEHOVAH,  
 Art the Most High over all the earth.

## PSALM LXXXIV.

To the chief Musician upon Gittith. A Psalm for [or, of] the sons of Korah.

*Gittith*; see on Psalm viii. There seems no reasonable ground for assigning this Psalm, as some have done, to the foundation of the second temple. The prayer for the Lord's anointed (verse 9), a customary designation of the king, is opposed to the idea of its having been written at a time when the nation was without a monarch, but in favour of the opinion of its composition by David, or on his behalf. Its pervading tone strongly resembles that of Psalm xlii, which is also a *Korahite* Psalm, and is usually assigned to the occasion of Absalom's rebellion. See note there. The present Psalm, remarks Jebb, "is one of exquisite and peculiar beauty," and "is most accurately divided by the *Diapsalma*," *Selah*. "The first division (verses 1-4) expresses a strong desire to return to the house of God, from which the Psalmist is now at a distance, and celebrates the happiness of those who" abide there. The second division describes a company travelling towards Zion, overcoming the difficulties of the way, and advancing from stage to stage enlivened by the prospect before them—verses 5-8. The third part is an amplification of the concluding verses of the two preceding ones, containing a prayer for the Divine favour, and celebrating the happiness of those who enjoy it.

- 1 HOW amiable *are* thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts !  
 2 My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the  
 LORD :

My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

18. *That men may know.* *Men* is not in the Hebrew, and the verb should be rendered as in the preceding verses, with the pronoun, *That they may know*; the purport of the three verses being that the enemies of God may be thoroughly defeated and made to acknowledge His sovereignty and might. *That thou, whose name alone is Jehovah*; rather, *That thou alone, whose name is Jehovah, &c.*

PSALM LXXXIV. 1. *How amiable, or, lovely.* The former is usually applied to persons only. *Tabernacles*; the plural used is for emphasis, denoting excellence.

2. *Crieth out for the living God.* Some follow the old translators in rendering the verb *rejoice*, but though its more usual sense is *shout for joy*, it also signifies to *cry for help*, or from earnest desire, which seems more appropriate to the context here.

- 3 Yea, the sparrow hath found an house,  
And the swallow a nest for herself,  
Where she may lay her young,  
*Even* thine altars, O LORD of hosts,  
My King, and my God.
- 4 Blessed *are* they that dwell in thy house :  
They will be still praising thee. Selah.
- 5 Blessed *is* the man whose strength *is* in thee ;  
In whose heart *are* the ways of them.
- 6 *Who* passing through the vale of Baca make it a well ;  
The rain also filleth the pools.

3. This verse is variously explained. Some take it in the sense conveyed by our version that the Psalmist contrasts his present lot with that of the birds, which could make their nests in the hallowed precincts of the altars of God, not on the altars themselves, for this from their frequent use would be impossible. Others, by supplying a supposed ellipsis, give to the passage the sense, *Even as the sparrow findeth a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, (so I seek) thine altars, &c.*, and others, again, understand the Psalmist as speaking of himself, under the similitude of a bird, which has found its place of rest. "My poor soul, the terrified little bird, has now found its right house, and its right nest, namely, thy altars; and if I had not found this beautiful house of God, I must have been for ever flying about out of the right way."—*Arndt*. The latter exposition seems rather strained, and less in accordance with the general tenor of the Psalm than either of the former, of which the first and more literal seems the preferable one, as affording an appropriate sense from the passage as it stands, without the insertion of any supplementary words. Among several nations of antiquity a bird which had built its nest within the limits of a temple was considered to have secured an inviolable asylum; and such a feeling may have prevailed among the Israelites.

5. *In whose heart are the ways of them.* What idea our translators intended to convey by the last two supplementary words, is not very obvious. The Hebrew is literally *the ways, or ascents, in their heart*, and what those ways are appears to be indicated by verse 7, where Zion is mentioned as the object in view, the ways to which they are pursuing with full purpose of heart. The Chaldee renders, "Confidence is in their heart;" but this is rather a paraphrase than a translation.

6. *The valley of Baca.* Whether this is a proper name, or whether it should be rendered, as in the old versions, *the valley of weeping*, or, as in B.C.B. "the valley of the Baca tree," is uncertain; but it appears to refer to some

7 They go from strength to strength,  
*Every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.*

rugged or desolate valley through which the travellers passed on their way to Jerusalem. The succeeding words may allude to reservoirs for rain water to supply the want of fountains or wells for the accommodation of travellers; or they may be understood figuratively as importing that the travellers to Zion are so cheered by the object of their journey, as to pass through a dry and barren region with as much joy of heart as if it abounded in springs and was fertilized by the early rains. By a different reading of one Hebrew word, which a few MSS. exhibit, the verse may be rendered: *Who, passing through the valley of Baca, drink of the fountain, the pools which the rain hath filled*; but this variation is not so well supported as to justify its adoption, and has probably arisen from the obscurity which the genuine reading presents.

7. *They go from strength to strength*, or, *from stage to stage*; from one place of refreshment and one degree of advancement to another. The scope and connection of these three verses (5-7) are elucidated by arranging them as proposed by Bishop Jebb, in one stanza forming an *epanodos*, or introverted parallelism, of which the first and last lines answer to each other, affording a continuous sense, and in like manner the second and fifth, and the third and fourth. His translation and comment are as follow:—

“Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee;  
 The passengers in whose heart are the ways;  
     In the valley of Baca make it a spring,  
     The rain also filleth the pools;  
 They go from strength to strength;  
 He shall appear before God in Zion.”

“The first line seems to contain the character of a confirmed proficient in religion, *his strength is in God*; the sixth line, to describe his final beatification, *he shall appear before God in Zion*. The intermediate quatrain may be regarded as descriptive of the intermediate course pursued by those who desire to be good and happy. They are *passengers*, but they know their destination and long for it; at a distance from the temple they are anxious to arrive there, the very high-ways to Jerusalem are in their heart. And what is the consequence? Affection smooths all difficulties; the parched and sandy desert becomes a rich, well watered valley; and they cheerfully advance from strength to strength, from one degree of virtuous proficiency to another.”  
 “Perhaps each gradation of goodness may be accounted, as it were, a fortress or stronghold upon the way, a secure stage in the pilgrimage of virtue.”—*Sacred Literature*, pp. 55-57. Not less apposite and beautiful is Merrick's paraphrase:—

- 8 O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer :  
Give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.
- 9 Behold, O God our shield,  
And look upon the face of thine anointed.
- 10 For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand.  
I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God,  
Than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.
- 11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield :  
The LORD will give grace and glory :  
No good *thing* will he withhold  
From them that walk uprightly.
- 12 O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.

PSALM LXXXV.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm for [*or, of*] the sons of Korah.

This Psalm is generally considered to refer to the release of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, and there does not appear to be much validity in

"Blest who, their strength on Thee reclined,  
Thy seat explore with constant mind,  
And Salem's distant towers in view,  
With active zeal their way pursue.  
Secure the thirsty vale they tread,  
While, called from out their sandy bed,  
As grateful showers from heaven distilled,  
Which freshest, kindest moisture yield,  
The copious springs their steps beguile,  
And bid the cheerless desert smile.  
From stage to stage advancing still,  
Behold them reach fair Zion's hill,  
And prostrate at her hallowed shrine,  
Adore the Majesty Divine ;  
Where Thy refulgent glory spreads  
Its purest splendours o'er their heads."

10. *A day in thy courts is better than a thousand; i.e., elsewhere.* The next clause forms an exception to the general grammatical correctness of our translators, having two inaccuracies, the use of *had* for *would*, in the first line; and the insertion of *to*, in the second. The marginal rendering:—*I would rather sit, or lie, at the threshold*, would have been better inserted in the text, being an expression implying a situation of the deepest humility; whereas that of *doorkeeper* in Eastern estimation is truly respectable and confidential, and among the Israelites the office of porter to the temple was held exclusively by Levites. See *Roberts's Oriental Illustrations*.



the objections urged by some against this view, which are founded principally upon the prayer for restoration to Divine favour in verse 4, &c., and would require verses 1 and 2 to be understood as alluding to some partial captivity; or, in a figurative sense, denoting simply a restoration to prosperity: see on Psalm liii. 6. The Psalm may have been composed before the restoration was complete, or in a subsequent time of trouble, when the deliverance from Babylon would naturally suggest a pledge and ground of hope for the renewed extension of Divine goodness and favour. "The introduction," remarks Jebb, "contains two topics, greatly expanded in the latter part. The first is the Divine goodness to the land of Judah; the second, the reversal of the captivity of God's people, and the forgiveness of their sins—verses 1 and 2 followed by *Selah*. In the sequel, the deliverance is spoken of as partly fulfilled, partly future, and there is a prayer for the entire remission of punishment already in a great measure granted—verses 4–8. Then follows an exquisite picture of God's graciousness to the land, in which the natural and the moral are intermingled in a manner peculiar to the poetry of Holy Writ. The increase of the land is truth, and righteousness acts as the herald of the Lord."

- 1 LORD, thou hast been favourable unto thy land :  
Thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.
- 2 Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people,  
Thou hast covered all their sin. *Selah*.
- 3 Thou hast taken away all thy wrath :  
Thou hast turned *thyself* from the fierceness of thine anger.
- 4 Turn us, O God of our salvation,  
And cause thine anger toward us to cease.
- 5 Wilt thou be angry with us for ever ?  
Wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations ?
- 6 Wilt thou not revive us again ;  
That thy people may rejoice in thee ?
- 7 Show us thy mercy, O LORD,  
And grant us thy salvation.

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PSALM LXXXV. 2. *Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people*; literally, borne, or carried away; the same word as, in Lev. xvi. 22, is applied to the scape-goat bearing the iniquities of the people. The Psalmist speaks of the release from captivity as an evidence of the Divine forgiveness; but the Jewish rabbis, carrying the idea further, make an erroneous and fanciful application of the passage, affirming that captivity is a mode of expression shadowed forth by the scape-goat, and that, as the scape-goat bore upon him the iniquities of the people into the wilderness, so they themselves atoned for their sins by being carried captive into a strange land.

- 8 I will hear what God the Lord will speak :  
 For he will speak peace unto his people,  
 And to his saints :  
 But let them not turn again to folly.
- 9 Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him ;  
 That glory may dwell in our land.
- 10 Mercy and truth are met together ;  
 Righteousness and peace have kissed *each other*.
- 11 Truth shall spring out of the earth ;  
 And righteousness shall look down from heaven.

8. *I will hear, &c.* I will hear what God will speak from His holy oracle. "And what follows in this verse contains the answer which he received."—*Boothroyd*. The Septuagint and Vulgate, however, give a different reading of the last line, which forms a more appropriate parallel with the preceding one, thus :—

"For he will speak peace to his people and to his saints,  
 And to those that turn their heart unto him."

9. *That glory may dwell in our land.* The wife of Phinehas named her child *Ichabod*, for she said, "The glory is departed from Israel, for the ark of God is taken."—1 Sam. iv. 21, 22. The Psalmist appears to use the word *glory* in a similar sense, referring to the restoration of the sanctuary, or rather, to the Divine presence there symbolized.—See on Psalm lxxviii. 61.

10, 11. This beautiful passage admits of various applications. The Jewish commentator, Yarchi, remarks :—"When Israel speak the truth, mercy from heaven shall come to this people ; and when they do righteousness, then there will be peace from the Holy One, blessed be He ! These shall embrace one another." "God is ready to perform His part in the covenant of mercy if His people only continue their fidelity to Him ; *i.e.*, when there is truth or fidelity on the one part, there will be mercy on the other, and again, if the people be righteous, there will be peace from God."—*Phillips*. "If this be taken as denoting human virtues, it is a beautiful representation of their union in the same heart. Truth will be found where mercy and kindness dwell, and peace is the associate and companion of righteousness. But if we apply them as displayed in the works of our Lord, they are still more proper. They met, they embraced, both in His life and death."—*Boothroyd*. "The whole character of the Psalm," observes Jebb, "is that of the evangelical prophet, Isaiah. Compare with the magnificent personification of mercy, truth, righteousness, and peace, and indeed with the whole tenor of the Psalm, the following passages of the prophet, Isaiah xl. 1, 2 ; xxxii. 15-18 ; xlv. 18. By an unequalled personification, righteousness and

- 12 Yea, the LORD shall give *that which is good* ;  
 And our land shall yield her increase.  
 13 Righteousness shall go before him ;  
 And shall set *us* in the way of his steps.

## PSALM LXXXVI.

A Prayer of David [*or, A Prayer, being a Psalm of David*].

David "finds himself in misery, deprived of all human help; his life is endangered by a band of proud, violent, ungodly men, after God had, at an early period, shown towards him great mercy, and had delivered his soul out of the deep hell—verse 13. As the last passage manifestly refers to his deliverance from the hand of Saul, we are *here* limited to those dangers to which he was exposed in the time of Absalom."—*Hengstenberg*.

- 1 BOW down thine ear, O LORD,  
 Hear me : for I *am* poor and needy.  
 2 Preserve my soul ; for I *am* holy :  
 O thou, my God, save thy servant  
 That trusteth in thee.

truth, hitherto at conflict with mercy and peace, are now, by the grace of Christ, reconciled; and all, having met in heaven, become the guardians and inhabitants of the earth."

13. *And shall set us in the way of his steps.* There is nothing in the Hebrew answering to *us*. The proper rendering is, *And shall set, or order, his steps in the way*; righteousness being personified as the precursor of the Lord, and the director of His steps.

PSALM lxxxvi. 2. *Preserve my soul, for I am holy*; marginal, *one whom thou favourest*. The Hebrew word is frequently used to denote the pious worshippers of God, and rendered *holy*, or more generally in the plural, *saints*; but when applied by the writer to himself, another expression is preferable. It sometimes signifies *kind*, or *merciful*, and Dr. A. Clarke, following the Chaldee, so renders it here, and adds:—"The spirit of this prayer is—

"The mercy I to others show,  
 That mercy show to me."

To the same purport is the comment of Mendelssohn: "He makes no boast, but as regards his enemies; for they did evil to him, but he did no evil to them, but good. They rejoiced at his calamity, but he at their good; and so Saul, who persecuted him, did David deliver several times; and so with respect to the rest of his enemies." The more general sense of the word, *pious*, or *thy true worshipper*, seems, however, most suitable. Boothroyd adopts the reading of the Syriac and Arabic versions, and two Hebrew MSS., *for thou art gracious, or merciful*, which he says "is much preferable

- 3 Be merciful unto me, O LORD :  
For I cry unto thee daily.
- 4 Rejoice the soul of thy servant :  
For unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.
- 5 For thou, LORD, *art* good, and ready to forgive ;  
And plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.
- 6 Give ear, O LORD, unto my prayer ;  
And attend to the voice of my supplications.
- 7 In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee :  
For thou wilt answer me.
- 8 Among the gods *there is* none like unto thee, O LORD ;  
Neither *are there any works* like unto thy works.
- 9 All nations whom thou hast made  
Shall come and worship before thee, O LORD ;  
And shall glorify thy name.
- 10 For thou *art* great, and doest wondrous things :  
Thou *art* God alone.
- 11 Teach me thy way, O LORD ;  
I will walk in thy truth :  
Unite my heart to fear thy name.

to the text." But, independently of the slight authority for the variation, its preferableness is more than questionable, as the Psalmist throughout the first four verses founds his petition on his own condition and circumstances, and sums up in verse 5 by an appeal to the Divine attributes.

8. *Among the gods, i.e.,* what are reputed as such, but whose divinity and existence are virtually denied in the next two verses. "Should anyone," observes Calvin, "assert that it is unseemly to compare God to the empty fictions, the answer is easy: the discourse is accommodated to the ignorance of men, because we know how daringly superstitious men raise their whims above the heavens. David casts contempt in a forcible manner upon their stupidity, inasmuch as they manufacture gods which in no way are attested to be gods." The parallelism would be better preserved by supplying the ellipsis in the next line, thus:—*Nor whose works are like unto thy works.* So, in effect, Luther's version, "And there is none that can do as thou doest."

11. *Unite my heart to fear thy name.* "Join all the purposes, resolutions, and affections of my heart together, to fear and to glorify thy name."—*A. Clarke.* The line may be rendered, as by the Septuagint and Vulgate:—*Let my heart rejoice, or my heart shall rejoice, to fear thy name;* but the common version is preferable and more emphatic.

- 12 I will praise thee, O LORD my God, with all my heart :  
And I will glorify thy name for evermore.
- 13 For great *is* thy mercy toward me :  
And thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.
- 14 O God, the proud are risen against me,  
And the assemblies of violent *men* have sought after my  
soul ;  
And have not set thee before them.
- 15 But thou, O LORD, *art* a God full of compassion, and  
gracious,  
Long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.
- 16 Oh turn unto me, and have mercy upon me ;  
Give thy strength unto thy servant,  
And save the son of thine handmaid.
- 17 Show me a token for good ;  
That they which hate me may see *it*, and be ashamed :  
Because thou, LORD, hast holpen me, and comforted me.

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13. *Thou hast delivered my soul ; or, rescued my life from the lowest hell ; rather, the hell, or grave, deep below.* There is nothing in the Hebrew to indicate the *superlative* degree, or the comparison which our version seems to imply of one depth with another.—See introductory note. “This strong figure is employed by the Psalmist to represent the magnitude of the danger from which God had been pleased to deliver him.”—*Phillips*.

16. *The son of thine handmaid ; tantamount to thy servant, in the previous line, but more emphatic.* “The son of an handmaid is a home-born slave ; compare Ex. xxiii. 12. As it is incumbent upon the servant that he serve his lord, it is the duty of the lord to help and protect his servant.”—*Hengstenberg*.

17. *Show me a token for good, &c.* “Let thy favour to me be so evident that my enemies may be put to shame and desist from their attempts to destroy me.”—*Boothroyd*. The Chaldee paraphrase of this verse affords an example of the fanciful mode of exposition in which the Jews have been wont to indulge :—“Give me a token for good ;—at the time when Solomon, my son, shall bring the ark into the house of the sanctuary, let the doors open of themselves for my sake, that they who hate me may see that Thou hast pardoned me, and be ashamed, and confess that Thou art the Lord who hast helped me and comforted me.”

PSALM LXXXVII.

A Psalm or Song for [or, of] the sons of Korah.

A *Psalm or Song*; see on Psalm xlviii. Various opinions have been entertained respecting the date and occasion of this Psalm. Some suppose it to have been written on the deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib's invasion; and this view, which is at least as probable as any other, is ably maintained by Hengstenberg, on a critical consideration of the circumstances of the nations referred to, and of their relative position in respect to the Jews at that period. The subject is the praise of Zion, the *city of God*, and forms three strophes, marked by *Selah*. The first declares, in general terms, the stability and felicity of Zion, blessed with the favour and protection of God—verses 1–3. The second celebrates her pre-eminence among the nations, and her glory as the spiritual birth-place of the Gentiles (verses 4–6); concluding with a brief chorus—verse 7. From the abruptness of its commencement, the Psalm has been conjectured to be only a fragment; but there is no need for such a supposition, as it is only one of numerous instances in which strong emotion is thus indicated. “If,” remarks Hengstenberg, “we suppose it to have been composed on the occasion referred to, it will appear quite intelligible that the Psalmist should break out so suddenly at the beginning with praise at the *security* of Zion; he merely lends his mouth in this case to the full heart of the people. Verse 2 also is seen in its true light; for this preference for Zion was at that time *verified*; its gates remained closed upon the enemies, while all the rest of the country was subject to their sway; the heart alone remained uninjured.” We have here an instance of the transposition of the relative and antecedent, as in Psalms xxviii. 8, and xxix. 6. As the pronominal affix does not agree grammatically with *Zion*, or the *city*, it is more correctly applied to *God*, *His foundation*, i. e., *His founded city*, as Hengstenberg renders it, who observes: “The founding of Zion took place, in a spiritual sense, when it was chosen to be the seat of the sanctuary. It was at that time that the place, though it had previously existed, received its true foundation.” “The sanctity of the mountain range, of which Zion formed the kernel, denoted its separation from all the other mountains of the earth, its inapproachable character, its impregnable security against all the attacks of the world. For this sanctity it was indebted to the choice of God, fixing it as the seat of His church upon the earth. The praise here bestowed upon Zion belongs peculiarly to the Church of God upon the earth. As it belonged to Zion only in so far as it was the seat of the Church, so it belongs to the Church only in so far as it really is the Church. The gates (verse 2) are specially mentioned, because it was against them that the assaults of the enemy were, in the first instance, directed. If they remained safe, the whole city was safe.” The phraseology appears to be familiar in the East. See the instances adduced by Roberts—*Oriental Illustrations*, p. 347.

- 1 HIS foundation is in the holy mountains.
- 2 The LORD loveth the gates of Zion  
More than all the dwellings of Jacob.
- 3 Glorious things are spoken  
Of thee, O city of God. *Selah*.

- 4 I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon  
 To them that know me :  
 Behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia ;  
 This *man* was born there.
- 5 And of Zion it shall be said,  
 This and that man was born in her :  
 And the Highest himself shall establish her.
- 6 The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people,

PSALM lxxxvii. 4-6. *Rahab* signifies *strong, proud, or insolent*, and appears to be used here and also in Psalm lxxxix. 10, and Isaiah li. 9, as an appellation of Egypt, as indicated by Isaiah xxx. 7, where the same Hebrew word, rendered *strength*, is applied to the Egyptians. *To them that know me.* It seems better to give to the preposition the sense of *among*, or *as*, and to consider the Psalmist as here speaking in the name of God :—*I will mention, or record, Rahab and Babylon among those who know me, i.e., as those that acknowledge me as their God.* *Behold (also) Philistia and Tyre with Ethiopia (among) those who know me.* To this purport, Coverdale renders : “I will thinke upon Rahab and Babylon so that they shal knowe me. Yee, the Philistines also and they of Tyre with the Morians.” *This man was born there. And of Zion it shall be said, this and that man was born in her.* Some understand the word *born* in the figurative sense, and, taking the words *this and that man*, in the latter clause, as denoting *every man*, explain thus : “In the places before mentioned, only here and there was an individual found to adopt the worship of the true God; but in Zion all persons, without exception, were brought into the covenant.”—*Phillips*. But, as the word *there*, in the first clause, seems more properly to refer to the places previously mentioned in contradistinction to *Zion* in the next line, it seems better to take *born* here in the literal sense, and figuratively in the next verse, where, “in allusion to the custom of kings numbering their subjects, and preserving a register of their names, God is said to make a register of those strangers and foreigners who became subjects, as it were, of His spiritual kingdom.”—*Phillips*. The purport of the whole will thus be :—As it is regarded an honour to be a native of either of the places enumerated, so it shall be esteemed an equal or greater distinction to be a native of *Zion*; and the Lord, when He writeth down the *peoples*, or nations (the Hebrew is plural), shall account every true convert as a native of *Zion*. “The being born,” remarks Hengstenberg, “stands here in anticipation of the New Testament doctrine of the second birth in a spiritual sense. *Zion* is the birthplace of the higher existence of the heathen, their spiritual mother-city.” The expression was employed by the Jews in reference to proselytes. It is said in the Talmud, “A stranger, when he becomes a proselyte, is as a little child who is just born.”

*That this man was born there. Selah.*

7 As well the singers as the players on instruments *shall be there :*

All my springs *are* in thee.

PSALM LXXXVIII.

A Song or Psalm for [or, of] the sons of Korah, to the chief Musician upon Mahalath Leannoth, Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite [or, A Psalm of Heman the Ezrahite, giving instruction].

*Heman the Ezrahite.* The succeeding Psalm is ascribed to *Ethan the Ezrahite*. The names of Heman and Ethan, are associated as two of the wise men whom Solomon excelled, in 1 Kings iv. 31, where Ethan is called the Ezrahite; and also in 1 Chronicles vi. 33, 44, xv. 17, as two of the Levites appointed by David "over the service of song in the house of the Lord;" and it is not improbable that they are the individuals referred to in the title, either as the authors, or those to whom the musical arrangement was specially confided. *Mahalath*. "Machalath, is probably the same as *machol*, a flute or pipe, from *chalal*, to perforate."—B.C.B. The next word, *Leannoth*, may signify concerning affliction, or to respond. The former rendering is very appropriate to the subject of the Psalm, and the latter to its structure, which is adapted for chanting in alternate chorus, presenting the same topics, recurring after certain intervals. It consists of three parts, as marked by *Selah*; the first (verses 1-7) containing a prayer and a statement of distress, which are repeated with greater conciseness in the second (verses 8-10), and with greater intensity and expansiveness in the third—verses 11-18. The two latter parts together form a regular *epanodos*; verses 11 and 12 answering to verse 10, verses 13 and 14 to the last two lines of verse 9, verses 14-17 to the first line of verse 9 and the last of verse 8, verse 18 to the first two lines of verse 8. Or, disregarding the *Selah*, the Psalm may be divided at the end of verse 8 into two parts, bearing a striking analogy to each other; both comprising the same topics in a corresponding series. It is expressive throughout of the utmost trouble, affliction and desertion, and has been supposed to refer to the case of king Uzziah, when smitten with leprosy and banished from his throne and palace. Several verses are certainly appropriate to the con-

7. "Rather, *They* (the people) *shall sing as they who lead up a dance, All my springs* (of happiness) *are in thee.*"—B.C.B. This verse is analogous to Psalm lxviii. 25, 26, which contains a doxology, as uttered by a chorus of singers and musicians. "It contains the words with which these new citizens of Zion praise it, as the fountain of all their salvation; and *singers and dancers* (at the head of every great procession of the heathen) speak thus: *All my fountains are in thee.* The fountains are the fountains of salvation, which revive the thirsty soul and the thirsty land; compare Isaiah xii. 3. In Ezek. xlvii. there flows a fountain, proceeding out of the Sanctuary in Zion, spreading the blessings of fertility and life through the wilderness, into the Dead Sea, the two emblems of the heathen world."—Hengstenberg.



dition of a person under such circumstances (see particularly verses 8 and 11, and note on verse 5); but others indicate a deeper and more inward affliction. By the Fathers and many later interpreters it has been regarded as prophetic of the humiliation and sufferings of Christ, and it is accordingly appointed by the Church of England to be read on "Good Friday," as the next Psalm is on "Christmas Day." Hengstenberg treats the two as component parts of one whole, and quotes the words of Stier as expressing the general remark of expositors, that it is "the most mournful of all the plaintive Psalms, yea, so wholly plaintive, without any ground of hope, that nothing like it is found in the whole Scriptures," while the next opens with the voice of praise. But, though this may be an instructive mode of contemplating them, there seems no solid ground for supposing that one was composed in connection with the other; and the private personal character of Psalm lxxxviii. contrasted with the more public and national tenor of Psalm lxxxix. is quite opposed to such a view.

- 1 O LORD God of my salvation,  
I have cried day *and* night before thee :
- 2 Let my prayer come before thee :  
Incline thine ear unto my cry ;
- 3 For my soul is full of troubles :  
And my life draweth nigh unto the grave.
- 4 I am counted with them that go down into the pit :  
I am as a man *that hath* no strength :
- 5 Free among the dead,  
Like the slain that lie in the grave,  
Whom thou rememberest no more :  
And they are cut off from thy hand.

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PSALM lxxxviii. 1. *I have cried, &c.*, literally, *By day I have cried, by night before thee*; the ellipsis in each clause being supplied by the other, in the first, *before thee*, in the second, *I have cried*.

5. *Free among the dead*. This clause has elicited much criticism; *free*, the usual meaning of the Hebrew word, not appearing to suit the connection. Hengstenberg takes it in the sense of a slave unwillingly freed from his master, *i.e.*, *free from God*, remarking that "with the heavenly master freedom is pre-eminently an evil; to be the servant of God is the highest happiness;" but this exposition seems rather strained. Some give to the word the sense it has in Arabic, *prostrate*, or *cast down*. Without however resorting to a foreign source or forcing a meaning, a safe clue to the proper one seems to be afforded by the use of the word in 2 Kings xv. 5, and 2 Chron. xxvi. 21, where it is said that Uzziah, when he had become a leper, dwelt, as our translators render it, in a *several*, *i.e.*, separate, house. Thus the import

- 6 Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit,  
In darkness, in the deeps.
- 7 Thy wrath lieth hard upon me,  
And thou hast afflicted *me* with all thy waves. Selah.
- 8 Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me ;  
Thou hast made me an abomination unto them :  
*I am* shut up, and I cannot come forth.
- 9 Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction :  
LORD, I have called daily upon thee,  
I have stretched out my hands unto thee.
- 10 Wilt thou show wonders to the dead ?  
Shall the dead arise *and* praise thee ? Selah.
- 11 Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave ?  
Or thy faithfulness in destruction ?
- 12 Shall thy wonders be known in the dark ?  
And thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness ?
- 13 But unto thee have I cried, O LORD ;  
And in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee.
- 14 LORD, why casteth thou off my soul ?  
*Why* hidest thou thy face from me ?
- 15 I am afflicted and ready to die from *my* youth up :  
*While* I suffer thy terrors I am distracted.

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of the present passage will be:—Cast out, as a leper, from among the living, and placed, as it were, with the dead.

10-12. "The interrogations in these verses imply the strongest negations."  
—*B.C.B.*

12. *The land of forgetfulness.* "The state of separate spirits or the invisible world. The heathen had some notion of this state, and feigned a river in the invisible world called Lethé, or Oblivion, and that those who drank of it remembered no more anything relative to their former state. —See Virgil, *Æneid* vi. 713."—*B.C.B.*

13. *My prayer prevent thee.* "Come before thee."—*B.C.B.* See on Psalm *xxi.* 3.

15. *From my youth up.* So all the ancient and most modern versions ; but the Hebrew may be rendered, as by Luther, *being thrust, or cast, out, tossed about, or agitated,* which would form a better parallel with the next line and be altogether more suitable, as it can hardly be supposed that the Psalmist in this verse, or in the Psalm generally, is describing a condition in which he had been placed from his youth.

- 16 Thy fierce wrath goeth over me ;  
 Thy terrors have cut me off.  
 17 They came round about me daily like water ;  
 They compassed me about together.  
 18 Lover and friend hast thou put far from me,  
 And mine acquaintance into darkness.

## PSALM LXXXIX.

Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite [*or, A Psalm for Ethan the Ezrahite, to give instruction*].

See introductory note to preceding Psalm. If the date usually assigned to this Psalm, viz., the Babylonian captivity, be correct, it could not be composed by either of the *Ethans* mentioned elsewhere ; it may, however, refer to some occasion of national calamity previous to the captivity. It consists of five divisions marked by *Selah*. "The first (verses 1-4) is the prologue, the theme of which is God's mercy and truth, manifested in His promise to David, and in its fulfilment. The second part, extending to verse 37, is an expansion of the first in all its parts ;—God's mercy, His truth, His covenant to David. The heavens are called upon to praise the wonders of Him who is to be feared. His power is declared in His doings in heaven and earth ; but righteousness and judgment, mercy and truth, are above all His works ;—the habitation of His throne, the heralds of His presence—verses 5-14. Then His grace is celebrated, and the happiness of that people who walk in the light of His countenance—verses 15-18. The key-note of the promise is sounded in the last line of verse 18 ; that royal seed whose line began in David, and which God had promised should last for ever. This promise is then recounted :—the conditional prosperity of his children, the unalterable establishment of his throne, fulfilled in the person of the Messiah : and this division ends, as it began, with the mention of the heavens as the witnesses of His truth—verses 19-37. This part (verses 5-37) forms of itself a complete and perfect poem uttered in the sublimest strain of prophetic inspiration. In the next division (verses 38-45), the strain altogether changes from a glorious prophecy to deep lamentation for the desolation and discomfiture of Israel. The style is completely different, resembling, both in structure and expression, the plaintive elegies of Jeremiah. In conclusion, there are two parallel epodes (verses 46-48 and 49-51), each consisting of supplication to God, contained in six lines, the first two being interrogatory, the third in each commencing with the word *Remember*."—*Jebb*.

- 1 I WILL sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever :  
 With my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all  
 generations.  
 2 For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever :

18. *Mine acquaintance into darkness* ; more literally, *are darkness*. "A figurative expression to denote that he now never saw them."—*B.C.B.*

PSALM LXXXIX. 2. *For I have said, i.e., in my heart,—concluded.* The old

- Thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.  
 3 I have made a covenant with my chosen,  
 I have sworn unto David my servant,  
 4 Thy seed will I establish for ever,  
 And build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.  
 5 And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD :  
 Thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints.  
 6 For who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD ?  
*Who* among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the  
 LORD ?  
 7 God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints,  
 And to be had in reverence of all *them that are* about him.  
 8 O LORD God of hosts,  
 Who is a strong LORD like unto thee ?  
 Or to thy faithfulness round about thee ?

versions, however, read, *Thou hast said*; thus introducing the Divine declaration in the next two verses, confirmatory of the promise made to David through the prophet Nathan. "As surely as this promise culminates in Christ, so surely is it significant to us," and "we may be ourselves comforted with that consolation which is administered here to the Old Testament Church."—Hengstenberg.

5-7. *The heavens* may signify the celestial orbs, as in Psalm xix. 1, where they are said to "declare the glory of God;" but the term here appears to be used rather for celestial spirits, or angels, as expressed in the next line by *the congregation of the saints*, where, after *thy faithfulness also*, the ellipsis is to be supplied from the previous line, *shall be praised*. In verse 6, *the heaven*, which in the Hebrew is a different word from the preceding, denotes the abode of the Deity. *Sons of the mighty*. Several of the old versions render, *Sons of God*; others, *Sons of the angels*. The heavenly spirits are no doubt intended, and the phrase *sons of* may be regarded simply as a Hebraism. Some understand *the congregation*, or *assembly*, of *saints*, or *holy ones*, in verses 5 and 7, to denote the Church on earth in contradistinction to that in heaven, in the parallel lines; but it seems more correct to take them as synonymous with the latter, the scope of these three verses being to express the superiority of God to, and His adoration by, all the hosts of heavenly beings.

8. Our translators, by the insertion of *to* which is not in the Hebrew, occasion an incongruity, making a comparison between a *person* and a *quality*. It should be, *Thy faithfulness, or truth, is round about thee, i.e., inseparable from thee and evidenced infallibly on all sides.*

- 9 Thou rulest the raging of the sea :  
 When the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.
- 10 Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain ;  
 Thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm.
- 11 The heavens *are* thine, the earth also *is* thine :  
*As for* the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them.
- 12 The north and the south, thou hast created them :  
 Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name.
- 13 Thou hast a mighty arm :  
 Strong is thy hand, *and* high is thy right hand.
- 14 Justice and judgment *are* the habitation of thy throne :  
 Mercy and truth shall go before thy face.
- 15 Blessed *is* the people that know the joyful sound :  
 They shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance.

9. "It is indeed a mighty power on the part of God, which holds the sea; and the man who has not seen the sea, has not seen the smallest portion of the power and wonders of God. As now God rules over the sea, He rules over the whole world, which is indeed a very boisterous sea, when the persecutors rise against the Church, like great waves and billows; but He stills them so, that they must not destroy Christ's little sheep. Yea, He also rules in our heart; when it is as unquiet and tempestuous as the sea, so that the great billows of conflict, trouble, anguish, despair, strike against the heart, then shall we know that the Lord rules over such hellish floods."—*Arnd.*

10. *Rahab.* Most of the old translators render *the proud*, but the word is generally considered here, as in Psalm lxxxvii. 4, an appellative of Egypt, though whether its etymology be Hebrew or Egyptian is uncertain. "From the ordinary sea, the Psalmist turns to the sea of the nations;" and "as Egypt got its main overthrow in the sea, the figure and the reality meet together."—*Hengstenberg.*

12. *Tabor and Hermon*, two mountains situate, the former to the west, and the latter (see on Psalm xxix. 6), to the east of Palestine, answer to the *north and south* in the previous line.

14. *Habitation*; rather *basis*, or *foundation*.

15. *The joyful sound*; the call of God—alluding to the sound of trumpets to call the people to their solemn feasts; the shout or "blowing of trumpets" for the "holy convocation"—Lev. xxiii. 24. *In the light of thy countenance.* "There is great loveliness in the countenance of a joyful,

- 16 In thy name shall they rejoice all the day :  
And in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.
- 17 For thou *art* the glory of their strength :  
In thy favour our horn shall be exalted.
- 18 For the LORD is our defence ;  
And the Holy One of Israel is our king.
- 19 Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one,  
And saidst, I have laid help upon *one that is mighty* ;  
I have exalted *one* chosen out of the people.

virtuous man. There is greater loveliness still in the countenance of an angel. But the highest loveliness is in the countenance of God. Just as parents look joyfully upon their little children, and when they are learning to walk guide them with their countenance and eye, so does the merciful God to those who love Him."—*Arnd.*

18. The literal rendering is, *Our shield is of the Lord, and our King is of the Holy One of Israel.* Our King designated in the first line as *our shield* (see Psalm xlvii. 9, and note), is of God's choice and appointment. "By the common translation," remarks Hengstenberg, "the joyful confidence in the salvation of God, expressed in verses 15–18, is wholly disjoined from the person of the anointed around which the whole Psalm revolves."

19. *Thy holy one.* The same word as in Psalm lxxxvi. 2, where see note. The succeeding verses are an amplification of the promise of God to David above referred to (see 2 Sam. vii. 12, 1 Chron. xvii. 11), and some understand by *thy holy one* the prophet Nathan, to whom *in vision* it was made known ; but the term seems more properly to denote the *subject* of that promise, and the clause may properly be rendered, *concerning thy holy one.* All the old versions, however, and a considerable number of the Hebrew MSS. read in the plural, *thy holy*, or, *pious, ones*, i.e., thy prophets, or thy Church and people at large who are interested in the promise. *I have laid help* ; I have made him the depositary of my help, or constituted him a helper. *One that is mighty.* "David was a powerful young man when his selection became possessed of vitality in his deed of heroism against Goliath. Still we must not limit ourselves to David as an individual, we must rather consider him as the representative of his eternally youthful heroic seed, a seed which reached its summit of perfection in Christ Jesus, Him on whom God has laid help. *I have found*, in verse 20, intimates that the choice of David was not a blind arbitrary act, lifting him out of the mass of the people ; but a step taken in consequence of a fixed Divine purpose. For the sake of impressing this upon the people, God, according to the history, put on the appearance of seeking and finding."—*Hengstenberg.*

- 20 I have found David, my servant;  
With my holy oil have I anointed him :  
21 With whom my hand shall be established:  
Mine arm also shall strengthen him.  
22 The enemy shall not exact upon him ;  
Nor the son of wickedness afflict him.  
23 And I will beat down his foes before his face,  
And plague them that hate him.  
24 But my faithfulness and my mercy *shall be* with him :  
And in my name shall his horn be exalted.  
25 I will set his hand also in the sea,  
And his right hand in the rivers.  
26 He shall cry unto me, Thou *art* my father,  
My God, and the rock of my salvation.  
27 Also I will make him *my* firstborn,  
Higher than the kings of the earth.  
28 My mercy will I keep for him for evermore,  
And my covenant shall stand fast with him.  
29 His seed also will I make *to endure* for ever,  
And his throne as the days of heaven.  
30 If his children forsake my law,  
And walk not in my judgments ;  
31 If they break my statutes,  
And keep not my commandments ;  
32 Then will I visit their transgression with the rod,  
And their iniquity with stripes.

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22. *Exact upon him ; or oppress him.*

25. *His hand ; i.e., his power, or authority.* The terms here employed (as in Psalm lxxii. 8, where see note) may refer to the Mediterranean and the Euphrates, the boundaries of the temporal kingdom of the house of David ; but these expressions, and others in the succeeding verses, can apply in their full and unlimited sense only to the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah.

27. *My firstborn.* This title is sometimes used as an indication of high regard or dignity. Thus Israel is called " my firstborn " (Ex. iv. 22), and Ephraim—Jer. xxxi. 9. So also it is applied to Christ by the Apostle—Rom. viii. 29, Col. i. 15, 18.

- 33 Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him,  
Nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.
- 34 My covenant will I not break,  
Nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.
- 35 Once have I sworn by my holiness  
That I will not lie unto David.
- 36 His seed shall endure for ever,  
And his throne as the sun before me.
- 37 It shall be established for ever as the moon,  
And as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah.
- 38 But thou hast cast off and abhorred,  
Thou hast been wroth with thine anointed.

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33. "We must not fail to notice that it is not said, I will not withdraw my mercy from *them*, the *sinner*s, but from *him*, the family as such. Now that the kingdom has passed from the *sinful* to the *holy* seed of David, the direct application of this paragraph has ceased. Still there exists between Christ and His Church a case analogous to that between David and his seed. As David's family was chosen in him, so that it always remained in possession of the favour of God, notwithstanding the fall and rejection of many of its individual members, in like manner the Church is chosen in Christ, and the sins of its members may hurt *themselves*, but cannot injure (or endanger) *it*."—Hengstenberg.

37. *It shall be established for ever as the moon; &c., i.e., "as long as the sun and moon shall endure, as long as time shall last, his kingdom shall continue among men. The moon is probably termed a faithful witness because by her, particularly, time is measured, especially among Eastern nations; or the rainbow may be intended; that faithful sign which God has established in the clouds, that the earth shall no more be destroyed by water."*—B.C.B.

38. In this and the following verses, the Psalmist places in strong contrast with the preceding glorious promises, the present degraded condition of the kingdom, expostulating with God in terms which have appeared so bold and even irreverent, that many of the Jews, remarks Rosenmüller, "have wondered that he should dare to address such language to God; and Aben Ezra mentions a wise pious man in Spain who would not read or hear this Psalm, and says that this portion should be regarded as the reproaches of enemies accusing God of violating His covenant, to which the Psalmist alludes in verses 50, 51." It has been supposed that the Psalmist partook of the general feeling of his countrymen, who, not apprehending the spiritual nature of the promise to the house of David, were induced by present



- 39 Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant :  
Thou hast profaned his crown *by casting it to the ground.*
- 40 Thou hast broken down all his hedges ;  
Thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin.
- 41 All that pass by the way spoil him :  
He is a reproach to his neighbours.
- 42 Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries ;  
Thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice.
- 43 Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword,  
And hast not made him to stand in the battle.
- 44 Thou hast made his glory to cease,  
And cast his throne down to the ground.
- 45 The days of his youth hast thou shortened :  
Thou hast covered him with shame. Selah.

troubles to despair of its fulfilment ; but this view is inconsistent with the full assurance of faith with which the Psalm opens ; unless, as some have conjectured, though apparently without any good ground, these verses are the addition of a later period. The correct exposition appears to be as thus given by Hengstenberg : " It is to be observed that all the objections of the Psalmist are directed to the one point, that the family of David is apparently in danger of *utter destruction*. It is not anything that had hitherto happened, considered in itself, that disquiets him—all might have happened only in terms of verse 32,—but as foreboding a yet more dreadful future. He is contending only against *appearances*, and knows in God, that he is contending only against appearances ; yet the contest is on that account all the harder ; the signs are very threatening, and were it not for God and His word, he would be forced to regard it as folly still to hope. No difficulty would ever have been felt by expositors with the *lamentation*, if it had been viewed as, what it really is, the basis of the following prayer, and if at the same time attention had been directed to the light which breaks in upon its darkness out of the preceding praises of God."

43. " Thou hast placed him in as perilous and hopeless a state as the soldier, whose sword, while defending his life against his mortal foe, breaks, or turns its edge ; or, in modern warfare, whose gun misses fire."—*B.C.B.*

45. *The days of his youth hast thou shortened ; i.e., caused the vigour of the kingdom prematurely to decay.* " Several expositors erroneously refer to this or that Jewish king, before the captivity, who reigned only a short time. The Psalmist has to do throughout, not with a single individual, but with the whole race."—*Hengstenberg.*

- 46 How long, LORD ? wilt thou hide thyself for ever ?  
 Shall thy wrath burn like fire ?
- 47 Remember how short my time is :  
 Wherefore hast thou made all men in vain ?
- 48 What man is *he that* liveth, and shall not see death ?  
 Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave ? Selah.
- 49 LORD, where *are* thy former lovingkindnesses,  
 Which thou swarest unto David in thy truth ?
- 50 Remember, LORD, the reproach of thy servants ;  
 How I do bear in my bosom *the reproach of* all the mighty people ;
- 51 Wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O LORD ;  
 Wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine  
 anointed.

46. The present punctuation makes an ellipsis after *How long Lord*, to be supplied by *shall these things be*, or words to that effect ; but the verse may be differently divided, thus :—

How long Lord wilt thou hide thyself ? for ever ?  
 (How long) shall thy wrath burn like fire ?

or thus :—

How long Lord wilt thou hide thyself ?  
 Shall thy wrath burn for ever like fire ?

The latter mode, forming two exactly parallel lines without any ellipsis, seems preferable.

47, 48. "In these verses the prayer that God would not further withhold His favour from His anointed and from the Church in him, is founded on the shortness of human life, as is the case very often with similar prayers in the book of Job ; e.g., vii. 6, 7, xiv. 1 ; compare Psalms xxxix. and lxxvii. 39. It would be hard if God were to fill up entirely with suffering, in the case of His own people, the short span of time which man has to live. The Psalmist speaks in the name of every individual member of the Church. After *Wherefore hast thou made all men in vain ?* we should suppose added,—as would be the case wert thou to give every man in perpetuity to misery. Even here the rich background of salvation after death is concealed before the eye of the Psalmist. It must first be made perfectly manifest in Christ."—*Hengstenberg*.

51. *Wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed ;* i.e., assailed him with reproaches wherever he goes and wherever he stands. The Chaldee paraphrases :—"Because they reproach the tardiness of the footsteps of thy anointed ;" i.e., the tardiness of the advent of the Messiah ; but it is doubtful whether the Hebrew will admit of this sense, and the former exposition seems more in accordance with the preceding lamentation, which describes the *present actual condition* of the house of David.

52 Blessed be the LORD for evermore.  
Amen, and Amen.

# PSALM XC.

A Prayer of Moses [*or*, A Prayer, *being a Psalm of Moses*], the man of God.

The authenticity of the title which ascribes this Psalm to Moses has been much controverted; his own longevity, and that of several of his contemporaries, as Miriam, who, being some years older and dying not long before her brother, was probably about 136; Aaron, whose age was 123; Joshua, whose age was 110; and Caleb, who represents himself as a strong man at 85 (Josh. xiv. 10, 11), being supposed to indicate a longer period than that assigned in verse 10 as the ordinary term of human life; but these appear to have been exceptional cases. The vigour of Moses at the age of 120 is recorded as an extraordinary fact (Deut. xxxiv. 7), and as the whole generation from twenty years old and upward who went out of Egypt, except Joshua and Caleb, became extinct during the forty years' sojourn in the wilderness, it is not probable that any great number exceeded the age of 70 or 80 years; nor do we find that the general age of man was greater at any subsequent period. In other respects there is nothing in the Psalm inconsistent with the supposition of its having been penned by Moses; but, on the contrary, its general purport is very appropriate to the circumstances in which he was placed, whether composed when sentence was pronounced on the murmurers, after the return of the spies, or when its effects, with other signal inflictions of Divine wrath, had been awfully manifested. "No incident in the wilderness," remarks Jebb, "can be conceived more likely to have suggested a sacred elegy, which should be at once a contrite prayer and indirect warning to the people, than this judgment of the Almighty; forming as that did one of the cardinal points of sacred history." "Eight-and-thirty years," says Hengstenberg, "spent amidst the gradual destruction of men lying under the curse, were well fitted to call forth the prayer of verse 15; they are sufficient to explain the melancholy view of life which here meets us, and the dread earnestness with which the Psalmist instructs us of our melancholy necessities; no glass was more suitable than this for giving a view of the common condition of human life." "The strong prominence given to the doctrine of *death as the wages of sin*, is especially characteristic, a doctrine which is not of frequent occurrence in Scripture, especially in the Psalms; and which is proclaimed as distinctly and impressively as it is here, only in the Pentateuch; viz., Gen. ii. and iii., and in those ordinances of the ceremonial law which threaten death."—*Hengstenberg*. Further, the poem, it has been justly remarked, bears the character of high antiquity. "It is grave, full of majesty and authority, somewhat concise, adorned with various comparisons, splendid with figures, but these rare and little used."—*Amyrald*. "The poem," says Ewald, "has something uncommonly striking, solemn, sinking into the depths of the Godhead; in contents and language it is

52. A doxology, as at the end of Psalms xli. and lxxii., concluding the third book. "It is thought to have been added by a later hand as it is wanting in two MSS. in another written without points, and in three others written separately from the text; though it is found in all the versions."—*B.C.B.*

throughout original and powerful." "The very opening of the Psalm," observes Jebb, "seems to indicate the writer of the book of Genesis, *Before the mountains were brought forth, &c.*, an idea which is also found in one of the sublimest passages of his blessing (Deut. xxxiii. 15); and in the very next passage we are reminded of the primeval curse pronounced by the Almighty and recorded by Moses, *Till thou return unto the ground, &c.* But the deeply subdued spirit of the whole Psalm, its intercessional character, its humility, its affectionate solicitude for the people, and the total absence of anything personal, are altogether in accordance with the recorded supplications, and the whole conduct of Moses, the man of God." "The Psalm consists of two main divisions; one of *meditation* (verses 1-10), and one of *prayer* (verses 11-17), each of which forms two parts. The Psalmist, or rather the Church, in whose name he speaks, meditating upon the transitory and perishable nature of human existence, is first driven thereby to cling inwardly and firmly to God, who as the Eternal, and therefore the Almighty, is the sole ground of hope for perishable and therefore feeble creatures—verses 1-6. But the perishable nature of man furnishes to meditation another important view, teaching the depths of our sinful corruption, and the greatness of the wrath of God against us; *death is the wages of sin*—verses 7-10. The prayer rising upon the basis of the meditation, is first connected with the thought to which prominence had been given in the verses immediately preceding. May God grant that we may know His wrath, reflected to us, as in a mirror, in the transitory nature of our being, in its entire magnitude, and our own sins in all their depths, and that thus we may have a wise heart, which is afraid of sin and lays hold of His commandments—verses 11, 12. After this the second prayer rises on the basis of verses 1-6. May God remove the severe sufferings with which He has oppressed the short existence of His people, and show Himself again gracious towards them—verses 13-17. All the fountains of consolation which revelation furnishes in view of the transitory nature of human life are assuredly not opened in our Psalm. It points only to the grace with which God refreshes His own people within the narrow boundary of this life; but it everywhere prepares the ground out of which another truth may grow. For the knowledge of God, as eternal omnipotence and love, is the foundation of the hope of eternal life; it pledges His power and His will to impart it to His people."—*Hengstenberg* ab.

- 1 LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place  
In all generations.
- 2 Before the mountains were brought forth,  
Or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,  
Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

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PSALM xc. 2. *Or ever thou hadst formed, &c.*, or, as the verb may be construed, *or ever the earth and the world were formed*; which seems preferable, as the former rendering *anticipates* the previous existence of the Deity, which it is the object of the verse to declare. *From everlasting to everlasting thou art God, or, thou art, O God.* "Thou art our only refuge; for

12. So teach *us* to number our days,  
That we may apply *our* hearts unto wisdom.
- 13 Return, O LORD ! How long ?  
And let it repent thee concerning thy servants.
- 14 Oh satisfy us early with thy mercy ;  
That we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
- 15 Make us glad according to the days *wherein* thou hast  
afflicted us,  
*And* the years *wherein* we have seen evil.
- 16 Let thy work appear unto thy servants,  
And thy glory unto their children.
- 17 And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us :  
And establish thou the work of our hands upon us ;  
Yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

## PSALM XCI.

The older Rabbis ascribed this and the nine following Psalms to Moses, on the principle that all anonymous ones are to be assigned to the author named in the last preceding title. The absurdity of this canon is sufficiently evinced by the contents of several of those referred to, as Psalm xc., which speaks of the events in the wilderness as belonging to a past age, and Psalms xcvii. and xcix., which make mention of Zion, and the latter also of the prophet Samuel ; while, on the other hand, several of the

goodness of God, though the converse might be true—*According to thy wrath, so is the fear, or dread, of thee.* But it is better to take the two clauses in connection, literally—*Who knoweth the power of thine anger, and thy wrath according to thy fear? i.e., as rendered by Boothroyd, "Who regardeth the power of thine anger, or thy wrath with reverence becoming thee?"*

13. This verse is characterized by abruptness of expression, indicative of strong emotion. With the ellipsis supplied, it would stand—*Return unto us, O Lord, with favour ! How long wilt thou be angry ? And let it repent thee of thy displeasure, or be reconciled, to thy servants ;* nearly in the same terms as the prayer of Moses (Ex. xxxii. 12), "Turn from thy fierce wrath and repent of this evil against thy people."

14. *O satisfy us early ;* Hebrew, *in the morning.* "Afflictions and sorrows are spoken of as the night of life, and the deliverance from them as the morning of joy."—*Roberts.*

16. *Let thy work, &c.* "God's works of mercy are His glory, as they display His perfections."—*Boothroyd.*

17. *Let the beauty ;* rather *kindness, grace, or favour.*

old versions prefix a title to the present Psalm ascribing it to David. Some internal evidence may, however, be derived from its contents in favour of the authorship of Moses. Jebb, who strongly advocates this view says: "It can hardly be questioned that the hand of Moses is here peculiarly visible. He begins with speaking of the dwelling-place of the Most High, the shadow of the Almighty, an image deeply stamped in the mind of him who had entered into the cloud on Mount Sinai, and had seen, as no man had ever seen heretofore, the glory of the God of Israel. When he speaks of God as his stronghold, he but uses that image, so characteristic of the Mosaic songs, 'the Rock' of his salvation. And in the beautiful simile of verse 4, who is not reminded of that more expanded picture, perhaps the most finished in all the range of sacred poetry, which at once marks the tenderness of the prophet, and the love of that Heavenly Father who inspired him.—Deut. xxxii. 11, 12. The line which follows, *His truth shall be thy shield and buckler*, is a reflection of the image towards the conclusion of the blessing—Deut. xxxiii. 29. And again in that prophetic passage (verses 11, 12), we find a counterpart of the assurance in his blessing—Deut. xxxiii. 27. In this Psalm also we have the imagery of the desert, *the lion and adder, the young lion and the dragon*: and there is no indistinct allusion to the judgments of the Almighty, to the plagues and pestilence which had afflicted the rebellious people, in verses 5, 6." Phillips infers from the last-mentioned passage that the Psalm was probably composed by Moses soon after the plague of the fiery serpents (Num. xxi. 6), which had the effect of bringing the people again into a state of obedience and consequently into a condition for experiencing the protection of God, and His assistance in vanquishing their enemies. Striking and interesting as are these points of comparison, yet they are not to be regarded as affording *conclusive* evidence on the question, for such coincidences of thought and expression may often be found between writers of different periods, especially where the later one has been familiar with the language and imbued with the spirit of his predecessor. But, whether composed by the same author or not, these two Psalms are very judiciously placed together by the compiler; the former dwelling on the frailty and brevity of life; the latter containing, in illustration "of the truth, if God be for me, everything else may be against me, the expression of joyful confidence in the protection and help of God in all troubles and dangers" (*Hengstenberg*), and concluding with a promise of long life and continued preservation from evil. "The Psalmist speaks, at one time, from his own person to the soul of the righteous one who is in danger, and revives its courage; while, at another time, he expresses confidence from the soul of the righteous man, and thus, in that pleasant alternation which forms the characteristic peculiarity of the Psalm, he employs, at one time, the *thou*, in the character of *teacher*, and, at another, the *I*, in the character of *scholar*. The call of instruction in Scripture (this is the meaning of the alternation) ought always to be responded to by the acknowledgment of the hearer."—*Hengstenberg*. From verse 14 to the end God Himself is the speaker.

1 HE that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High  
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

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PSALM xci. 1. This verse, as it stands here, has been regarded by some

- 2 I will say of the LORD,  
*He is my refuge and my fortress :*  
 My God ; in him will I trust.
- 3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler,  
*And from the noisome pestilence.*
- 4 He shall cover thee with his feathers,  
 And under his wings shalt thou trust :  
*His truth shall be thy shield and buckler.*
- 5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night ;  
*Nor for the arrow that flieth by day ;*
- 6 *Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness ;*  
*Nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.*
- 7 A thousand shall fall at thy side,  
 And ten thousand at thy right hand ;  
*But it shall not come nigh thee.*
- 8 Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold  
 And see the reward of the wicked.

critics as a mere truism, a "nugatory proposition," as Bishop Lowth terms it, who proposes to connect it with verse 2 thus :—

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High,  
 Who abideth under the shadow of the Almighty,  
 Who saith of the Lord, or, shall say of the Lord, &c."

But those who take this view seem to have overlooked the distinction between the two verbs in which the point lies, the first denoting only temporary refuge, the second, permanent security. *He that dwelleth*, rather *sitteth*, in the covert of the Most High, shall abide, literally lodge all night (in contradistinction to merely sitting), under the shadow of the Almighty; i.e., He who fully commits himself to the direction and guardianship of God, shall never fail to enjoy His protection. Thus understood the verse is a beautiful exordium, announcing the proposition of which the rest of the Psalm constitutes an illustration and amplification.

5, 6. The four lines of these two verses exhibit a series of double parallels: *the terror by night*, the nightly or covert attacks of enemies; *the arrow that flieth by day*, their more open assaults; *the pestilence that walketh in darkness*, an infectious disease invisibly diffusing itself; *the destruction that wasteth at noonday*, a disease or other physical evil of a more obvious character: the first line answering to the second as to the kind of evil, and to the third as to the time, or mode, of operation, and so of all the rest respectively.

- 9 Because thou hast made the LORD, *which is* my refuge,  
Even the Most High, thy habitation ;
- 10 There shall no evil befall thee,  
Neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.
- 11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee,  
To keep thee in all thy ways.
- 12 They shall bear thee up in *their* hands,  
Lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.
- 13 Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder :  
The young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under  
feet.

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9. This verse may be rendered :—

For thou LORD art my refuge ;  
Thou hast made thy habitation on high : or,  
Thou hast made the Most High thy habitation.

The latter is preferable, but involves an abrupt change of persons, as would also our common version without the addition of the words, *which is*. If a conjectural emendation of the sacred text is in any case admissible, the present seems one in point, as a change of one letter, ך (ka) for ך (ce), would remove all difficulty and make the two lines exactly parallel :—

Because thou hast made the LORD thy refuge,  
The Most High thy habitation.

11, 12. "God's tender regard for the weaknesses of man is here represented by the figure of a nurse bearing up children in her hands, so as to prevent them from falling, and from striking their feet against stones, which would cause them, if unassisted, to fall."—*Phillips*. "The language does not apply to dangers which one seeks, but only to such dangers as meet the righteous man unsought in his course through life. The artifice of the tempter (Matt. iv. 6) consisted in keeping this out of sight."—*Hengstenberg*.

13. Bochart supposes *both* the words rendered *the lion* and *the young lion* to denote here some species of serpent ; but there seems no good reason to deviate in this instance from their usual meaning, the effect of which is only to weaken the force of the passage, by limiting the figure to *one* idea ; whereas, as Hengstenberg remarks, "the lions and serpents represent the *two* kinds of danger to which the righteous man is exposed—open violence and secret cunning." "We find this passage literally true in the case of the Israelites, who were led through the great and terrible wilderness wherein were fiery serpents and scorpions (Dent. viii. 15) ; also in the case of David smiting the lion and the bear, and in that of Daniel who came forth



- 14 Because he hath set his love upon me,  
Therefore will I deliver him :  
I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.
- 15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him :  
I *will be* with him in trouble ;  
I will deliver him, and honour him.
- 16 With long life will I satisfy him,  
And shew him my salvation.

## PSALM XCII.

A Psalm or Song for the Sabbath-day.

*A Psalm or Song*; see on Psalm xlviii. Some of the Rabbis, in contravention of the canon before noticed, which would attribute this Psalm to Moses, have claimed for it a far higher antiquity. "Our Rabbis of blessed memory," observes Kimchi, "said that this Psalm or Song for the Sabbath, the first man said it, who was created on the eve of the Sabbath, and on the Sabbath he awoke early in the morning and said this Psalm." But unless they were prepared to show, in opposition to Gen. iv. 21, which appears to ascribe the invention to Jubal, that instrumental music formed part of the harmony of paradise, and further how Adam there acquired his ideas of the *cedars of Lebanon*, of *old age*, of the *brutish man*, and the *fool*, and who were his *enemies* and the *wicked that rose up against him*, these "Rabbis of blessed memory" have been most unhappy in their choice of a Psalm for which to claim the authorship of our first parent. There is nothing in its contents to indicate the date of this Psalm, but its style and matter seem to favour the supposition of its having been composed by David. "According to the title it was intended for use in the public worship of God on the Sabbath, on which day there was held 'a holy convocation'—Lev. xxiii. 3. It is manifestly well adapted for such a use. On the Sabbath-day men ought to rest from their own works, to consider the works of God, leisurely and together. Among these, one of the greatest, not less great than the creation of the heavens and the earth, is His preservation of His Church in the midst of this evil world."—*Hengstenberg*. It is stated in a Talmudic tract that certain Psalms were appropriated for every day of the week, to be sung by the Levites in the sanctuary.

from the lions' den unhurt. It was eminently true in the case of our Lord, who also bestowed this power on the first disciples."—Luke x. 19; Mark vi. 18.—*Phillips*.

16. "Expositors are too ready with the obvious remark that the promise of long life is specially an Old Testament one." "The difference between the Old and the New Testament in this respect is this, that, in the former, the other form in which God imparts blessings to His people, namely, by taking them early to Himself, was less known, although in ancient times the history of Enoch, as a significant type, gave intimation concerning it."—*Hengstenberg*.

- 1 *IT* is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD,  
And to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High :
- 2 To show forth thy lovingkindness in the morning,  
And thy faithfulness every night,
- 3 Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery ;  
Upon the harp with a solemn sound.
- 4 For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work :  
I will triumph in the works of thy hands.
- 5 O LORD, how great are thy works !  
And thy thoughts are very deep.
- 6 A brutish man knoweth not ;  
Neither doth a fool understand this.
- 7 When the wicked spring as the grass,  
And when all the works of iniquity do flourish ;  
*It* is that they shall be destroyed for ever ;

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PSALM xcii. 3. *Upon the harp with a solemn sound ;* Hebrew, *upon the higgaion, with the harp* ; see on Psalm ix. 16, where the former word occurs with *Selah*. From its position here, in the midst of musical instruments, preceded by *upon*, as those in the previous line, it probably denotes an instrument of some kind. The Seventy render :—"With a song upon the harp ;" Boothroyd :—"With the sweet melody of the harp ;" others :—"With the murmuring harp, or, With musing upon the harp. But, though these senses are deducible from the Hebrew root, they require the connection of the two prepositions and nouns to be reversed.

5-7. "The depth of the thoughts of God is seen especially in this, that their apparent end is so often seen to be the actual beginning of their realization. When everything appears to be gone, and wickedness completely to triumph, the salvation of the righteous and the destruction of the wicked suddenly break forth. Were God's thoughts less deep and glorious, did He repay the wicked at every particular transgression immediately with His punishment, and did He bestow salvation immediately upon the righteous, according to the canon which Job's friends, with their limited views, laid down, the government of the world would become plain even to the dark eye of ungodliness. But its depth makes it a *secret*, the understanding of which is very often in times of conflict withheld even from the pious, as is manifest from the example of Job and the author of Psalm lxxiii."—*Hengstenberg*. Much less is it perceived by the "*brutish, or stolid, man*, one intent only on the gratification of his carnal appetites, and the *fool* as to things pertaining to the works and providence of God ; one who is destitute of Divine illumination."—*Phillips*.

- 8 But thou, LORD, *art* most high for evermore.  
 9 For, lo, thine enemies, O LORD,  
 For, lo, thine enemies shall perish;  
 All the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.  
 10 But my horn shalt thou exalt like *the horn of an unicorn*:  
 I shall be anointed with fresh oil.  
 11 Mine eye also shall see *my desire* on mine enemies,  
*And mine ears shall hear my desire*  
 Of the wicked that rise up against me.  
 12 The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree:  
 He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

8. This verse forms the centre and "the summit point of the Psalm. God is the concrete and the personal *height*; the appearance of *depth* is rather the highest heights. God is strongest when He appears to our short-sighted eye as weak."—Hengstenberg.

10. Bruce, the Abyssinian traveller, who considers the *Reem*, or *Unicorn* of Scripture, to be the rhinoceros, remarks: "The horns of other animals are inclined to some degree of parallelism with the nose, or *os frontis*. The horn of the rhinoceros alone is erect and perpendicular to this bone, on which it stands at right angles, thereby possessing a greater purchase or power as a lever than any horn could possibly have in any other position. This situation of the horn is very happily alluded to in the sacred writings:—*My horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn*; and the horn here alluded to is not wholly figurative; but was really an ornament worn by great men in the days of victory, preferment, or rejoicing; when they were anointed with new, sweet, or fresh oil, a circumstance which David joins with that of erecting the horn."—Burder's *Oriental Customs*. *I shall be anointed*; literally, *mixed*; the same word as is used to describe the mingling of oil with flour in meat offerings, and expressing, remarks Horsley, "much more than a superficial unction, viz., a penetration of the whole substance of the man's person by the oil." *With fresh*; literally *green*, oil, probably cold drawn oil, that which has been expressed from the nut or fruit without boiling, which is less in quantity, but more valued for its greater purity and strength.

11. This verse may be rendered without the words in italics:—*Mine eye also shall look* (Vulgate, "look down") *on mine enemies, and mine ears shall hear of the wicked that rise up against me*. See on Psalm liv. 7. "It is only said in general that there is a looking and a hearing on, or in regard to, the enemies; *what* that is there is no occasion for particularly describing."—Hengstenberg.

12. "The noble and beautiful palm tree affords an agreeable shade; its

- 13 Those that be planted in the house of the LORD  
Shall flourish in the courts of our God.
- 14 They shall still bring forth fruit in old age ;  
They shall be fat and flourishing ;
- 15 To show that the LORD is upright :  
*He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.*

PSALM XCIII.

"It is highly probable that this Psalm was written on the same occasion as the preceding, as a part of which it is written in twelve MSS."—*B.C.B.* Its style is similar (compare particularly verses 3, 4, with verses 8, 9, of the former), but it is distinct and complete in itself and more general in its character, proclaiming the sovereignty and majesty of God as displayed in creation and providence, and leading to the inference that He who controls the waves of the sea that they may not overwhelm the earth, will protect His Church from all the assaults of her foes. The language with which it opens is derived from that used at the proclamation of a new sovereign (see 2 Sam. xv. 10 ; 1 Kings i. 11-13 ; 2 Kings ix. 13), and from his investiture with the robes

fruit, the date, makes a great part of the diet of the East, the stones of which are ground for the camels ; the leaves are made into couches, baskets, &c. ; its boughs into fences ; the fibres of the boughs into ropes, and the rigging of small vessels ; its sap, into arrack ; and its wood serves for lighter buildings and firewood. See Dr. Clarke's travels."—*B.C.B.* "Yarchi expounds the verse thus :—'The righteous man is as the palm tree for producing fruit, and as the cedar in Lebanon for increasing its root.' The Chaldee paraphrase is substantially the same."—*Phillips*.

13. This verse would connect better with the preceding by a more literal rendering :—*Planted in the house of the Lord, they (the righteous) shall flourish in the courts of our God.* The Psalmist probably alludes to the custom in the East of planting trees in the courts both of religious buildings and domestic habitations, for which purpose the palm is much esteemed, both for the elegance of its form, and the agreeable shade diffused by its spreading head.

14. In this verse "the reference is still to the palm tree, which is very long-lived for a fruit tree, and continues in fertility and vigour at an age far more than equivalent to the extreme old age of man. It reaches its full maturity in about thirty years (but bears fruit much earlier), and continues in full productiveness and perfect beauty for about seventy years longer. After this it begins gradually to decline, and perishes towards the latter end of its second century. This may serve as a general statement, but it is liable to large exceptions, and trees far more than two centuries old have been known."—*Kitto's Illustrated Commentary*.

and insignia of royalty, implying, remarks Hengstenberg, "a new glorious manifestation of the Divine dominion, as it were, a new ascent of the throne, but that an eternal throne, in opposition to the modern throne of the powers of the world."

- 1 THE LORD reigneth, he is clothed with majesty ;  
The LORD is clothed with strength, *wherewith* he hath  
girded himself :  
The world also is established,  
That it cannot be moved.
- 2 Thy throne is established of old :  
Thou art from everlasting.
- 3 The floods have lifted up, O LORD,  
The floods have lifted up their voice ;  
The floods lift up their waves.
- 4 The LORD on high is mightier than the noise of many waters,  
*Yea, than* the mighty waves of the sea.
- 5 Thy testimonies are very sure :  
Holiness becometh thine house, O LORD, for ever.

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PSALM xciii. 1. There is nothing in the Hebrew answering to *wherewith*, and both the previous verbs, *He is clothed*, appear to belong to the preceding clause, being one of the emphatic verbal reduplications which characterize the Psalm (see verses 3, 4) : *The Lord reigneth ; he is clothed—he is clothed with majesty ; The Lord hath girded himself with strength* : or, retaining the order of the words in the original : *the Lord reigneth ; with majesty he is clothed, he is clothed ; The Lord with strength hath girded himself, &c.*

5. *Thy testimonies are very sure, or faithful.* "Thou wilt as surely keep thy word as thou wilt keep possession of thy throne."—*Clarke*. The succeeding clause may refer either to the holiness required on the part of the Church of God, or to the protection afforded to it by Him, rendering it sacred and inviolable against all assault. The latter seems more in accordance with the previous line, and with the general tenor of the Psalm. "Thy house shall, by thy sacred august presence, remain for ever undefiled ; nor shall it be violated or polluted by the insolence of thine enemies." *Amyrald*. "The house for whose preservation the Psalmist expresses his confident hope, is the house where the Lord dwells with His people and they with Him. The preservation of the house for its own sake is not spoken of, but only in so far as it is the seat of the Church. In room of the first house destroyed by the Chaldeans, there arose the second ; and the second was not destroyed till it had become a mere shell without a kernel, and a glorious new erection of the house of God had come into life in the Christian Church."—*Hengstenberg*.

PSALM XCIV.

The old versions ascribe this Psalm to David, as well as the preceding, which the Septuagint and Vulgate entitle, "For the day before the Sabbath when the earth was founded, or first inhabited;" and the present one, "For the fourth day of the week." It is supposed by some to have been penned by David on the occasion of Absalom's rebellion, to which, and the fate of the conspirators, the concluding verses (20-23), appear very appropriate; but some passages seem rather to place it in a national point of view, and consequently to indicate a later date, when the people were subject to a foreign power. "That the Psalm," remarks Hengstenberg, "does not refer to the internal difference between the wicked and the righteous, but to the relation to *heathen enemies*, is evident from verse 5, according to which the wicked distress the *people of the Lord*, and oppress His *inheritance*; from verse 14, according to which *the Lord will not forget His people*, and will not *forsake His inheritance*; from verse 10, according to which the punishment of the impious *heathen* is what the ungodly part of the people deny, and the pious hope for in faith; and finally, from the mention of *the throne of iniquity* in verse 20, apparently favoured by God, by which we can understand only the heathen power." This reasoning, however, is not conclusive. Verse 10 may import that He, who, as the judge of all the earth, chastiseth the heathen, will not leave the iniquities of His professed people unpunished; and the other expressions referred to may denote the oppression of the people by unjust rulers of their own nation, or the persecution of the righteous, the "Israelites indeed," by the powerful wicked. This Psalm is characterized, like the two preceding, by verbal reduplications (see verses 1, 3); and in verse 8 the *brutish* and the *fool* are associated, as in Psalm xcii. 6. "It is possible," remarks Jebb, "that the raging of the sea in the former Psalm (xciii. 3), may be emblematical of the madness of the people enlarged on in this."—See verse 3.

- 1 O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongeth;  
O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself.
- 2 Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth:  
Render a reward to the proud.
- 3 LORD, how long shall the wicked,  
How long shall the wicked triumph?
- 4 How long shall they utter and speak hard things?  
And all the workers of iniquity boast themselves?
- 5 They break in pieces thy people, O LORD,  
And afflict thine heritage.

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PSALM xciv. 1. *Shew thyself*; or *shine forth*.

2. *Lift up thyself*, or *rise up*; ascend the judgment seat.

3-7. The verbs are in the same form in the Hebrew throughout these verses, which may be read as a series of interrogations, the *how long* being

- 6 They slay the widow and the stranger,  
And murder the fatherless.
- 7 Yet they say, The LORD shall not see,  
Neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.
- 8 Understand, ye brutish among the people :  
And ye fools, when will ye be wise ?
- 9 He that planted the ear, shall he not hear ?  
He that formed the eye, shall he not see ?
- 10 He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct ?  
He that teacheth man knowledge, *shall not he know ?*
- 11 The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man,  
That they *are* vanity.
- 12 Blessed *is* the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD,  
And teachest him out of thy law ;
- 13 That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity,  
Until the pit be digged for the wicked.
- 14 For the LORD will not cast off his people,  
Neither will he forsake his inheritance.
- 15 But judgment shall return unto righteousness :  
And all the upright in heart shall follow it.

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understood to apply to the whole; or the interrogative form may be dropped, and that of narration commenced, either at verse 3, or, as in our own version, at verse 4, which is the arrangement adopted by the generality of translators.

9-11. "This is one of the most beautiful and convincing appeals to the common sense and conscience of men."— *Boothroyd*.

12, 13. "The Lord procures rest before, or against, *the days of adversity*, inasmuch, as by His instruction and consolation, He brings it about that these do not any more inwardly distress the righteous, and lead him to murmur, to despair, or to fall away" (*Hengstenberg*); but he awaits with patience and tranquillity the course of Divine providence, which will end in the destruction of the wicked.

15. The *judgment*, or "*right* which at present is inverted, inasmuch as the wicked have the upper hand, is brought back, at the proper time, to *righteousness*; is again administered according to its rule. The righteous accompany it with the joy of their heart."—*Hengstenberg*. The sense of this passage appears to be the same as that of Isaiah xlii. 3: "He shall bring forth judgment unto truth."

- 16 Who will rise up for me against the evildoers ?  
Or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity ?
- 17 Unless the LORD *had been* my help,  
My soul had almost dwelt in silence.
- 18 When I said, My foot slippeth ;  
Thy mercy, O LORD, held me up.
- 19 In the multitude of my thoughts within me  
Thy comforts delight my soul.
- 20 Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee,  
Which frameth mischief by a law ?
- 21 They gather themselves together against the soul of the  
righteous,  
And condemn the innocent blood.
- 22 But the LORD is my defence ;  
And my God is the rock of my refuge.
- 23 And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity,  
And shall cut them off in their own wickedness ;  
Yea, the LORD our God shall cut them off.

PSALM XCV.

The words "saying in David," which precede the quotation from this Psalm in Hebrews iv. 7, may possibly be only a popular mode of designating the whole book by the name of the author of the greater part ; still it is most probable that the apostle regarded the Psalm itself as David's, especially as he quotes from the Septuagint, which, in common with the Vulgate, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, ascribes it to him. Psalm xciii. and the present, and the five following Psalms, are very similar in their style

17. *My soul had almost dwelt in silence ; i.e., I had been in the place of the dead ; Septuagint,—“in Hades.”* This and the following verse may be rendered in the future, which seems to connect better with verse 16 :—*Unless the Lord be my help, my soul will soon dwell in silence. If I say, My foot slippeth, thy mercy, O Lord, will hold me up.*

19. *In the multitude of my thoughts within me ; Septuagint—“my griefs within my heart :”* Boothroyd—“mine inward anxieties ;” a sense implied by the connection, but not expressed by the Hebrew word in itself. ¶

20. This verse may refer to kings or rulers, who oppress their subjects by unjust laws, or to those possessed of power, or authority, in any inferior degree, who exercise it in a manner opposed to the Divine law of justice and righteousness.



and character, commencing nearly alternately with, *The Lord reigneth*, and, *Let us sing*, or *make a joyful noise to the Lord*, and forming together a sublime continuous note of joyful and triumphant praise; and have been regarded, both by Jews and Christians, as prophetic of the times of the Messiah. Psalm xcvi., as well as the present, is quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews (i. 6); in allusion to which Bishop Horsley says: "These six Psalms form, if I mistake not, one entire prophetic poem, cited by St. Paul, under the title of the Introduction of the First-Born into the world. Each Psalm has its proper subject, which is some particular branch of the general argument, the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom. Psalm xcv. asserts Jehovah's Godhead and His power over all nature, and exhorts His people to serve Him. In Psalm xcvi. all nations are exhorted to join in His service, because He cometh to judge all mankind. In Psalm xcvi. Jehovah reigns over all the world, the idols are deserted, the Just One is glorified. In Psalm xcvi. Jehovah hath done wonders, and wrought deliverance for Himself. He hath remembered His mercy toward the house of Israel; He comes to judge the whole world. In Psalm xcix. Jehovah, seated between the cherubim in Zion (the visible Church), reigns over all the world, to be praised for the justice of His government. In Psalm c. all the world is called upon to praise Jehovah, the Creator, whose mercy and truth are everlasting."

- 1 O COME, let us sing unto the LORD :  
Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.
- 2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving,  
And make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.
- 3 For the LORD is a great God,  
And a great King above all gods,
- 4 In his hand are the deep places of the earth :  
The strength of the hills is his also.

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PSALM XCV. 1. *Let us sing*; more correctly, *rejoice, exult, or shout for joy*.

3. *A great king above all gods*; "all that are accounted gods, whether angels, or princes, or idols."—Boothroyd.

4. *Deep places*. The Hebrew root signifies to *search out*, and the Psalmist is supposed by some to allude to mines in the recesses of the earth, which men explore for the precious metals. The term *strength*, in the next line, appears to have no etymological support, unless our translators used it in the sense of *treasures*, which some assign to the Hebrew word, and which would answer to the preceding idea of *mines*; but the marginal rendering *heights*, which is that of the ancient and most modern translators, seems preferable: *the depths of the earth, and the heights of the hills*, literally, *the searchings of the earth, and the stretchings of the hills* (see Hengstenberg), with *the sea and the dry land*, in the next verse, being a poetical periphrasis for the whole globe.

- 5 The sea is his, and he made it:  
And his hands formed the dry land.
- 6 Oh come, let us worship and bow down :  
Let us kneel before the LORD our maker.
- 7 For he is our God ;  
And we are the people of his pasture,  
And the sheep of his hand.

To-day if ye will hear his voice,  
8 Harden not your heart, as in the provocation,  
And as in the day of temptation in the wilderness :

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6. This is the middle verse, and, "as it were, the beating heart of the Psalm; containing the result gathered out of the first half, and forming the point of transition to the second." "We have here before us the culminating point of the Psalm—the festive moment of devotion; when the bells ring in *curia regis*. This joy, where the heart is full of it, seeks also its bodily expression. Still even this is only desired as the expression of what fills the heart. This is manifest from what follows; when, as the consequences of kneeling and falling down, it appears that the worshipper listens to the voice of God, and does not harden his heart. Hence, in the *shell* of the kneeling, there must be contained the *kernel* of unreserved *surrender*, which manifests itself in willing obedience."—Hengstenberg.

7. *We are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.* It would be more in accordance with the ordinary usage to read, *the people of His hand and the sheep of His pasture* (compare Psalms lxxix. 13, c. 3); but the transposition involves no incongruity, and affords no substantial ground for calling in question, as some have done, the correctness of the text, which, with scarcely an exception, has the support of all the MSS. and versions. *To-day if ye will hear his voice.* The *if* does not properly connect with what follows, for the obedience and the hardening cannot exist together, but expresses an ardent desire—*Oh that ye would hear !* as in Exodus xxxii. 32, and Luke xix. 42. The phrase, in fact, is elliptical, requiring some such words as, *happy will it be, or, it shall be well with you,* to complete the idea: compare Ex. xxiii. 22, where the expression is complete. A similar ellipsis occurs in the form of oath in verse 11 (marginal rendering), and Hebrews iv. 3, 5, where the *if* is equivalent to a strong negation, and the complete phrase would be, the Deity being the speaker—*I am not God, if they shall enter, &c.*

8. The words rendered *provocation* and *temptation* are *Meribah* and *Massah*, the names given to a place in Rephidim, "because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord."—Ex. xvii. 7. The

- 9 When your fathers tempted me,  
 Proved me, and saw my work.
- 10 Forty years long was I grieved with *this* generation,  
 And said, It is a people that do err in their heart,  
 And they have not known my ways:
- 11 Unto whom I swore in my wrath  
 That they should not enter into my rest.

## PSALM XCVI.

This Psalm with some variations forms a portion of that which David is said in 1 Chron. xvi. to have "delivered into the hand of Asaph and his brethren," to celebrate the removal of the ark from the house of Obadedom to Mount Zion. It has been inferred from what is there stated, that David composed the Psalm as there given, for this occasion, and that it was subsequently divided into several parts, the first constituting, with considerable addition, Psalm cv.; the second, with some variation, the whole of Psalm xcvi.; and the remaining three verses, the beginning and conclusion of Psalm cvi.; but from the want of any obvious connection between the several parts as they stand there, and, on the other hand, the completeness of the middle portion (verses 23–33 in 1 Chron. xvi.), in its distinct form, as the present Psalm, and the close relation of the preceding verses (8–22) to what follows them in Psalm cv., and of the concluding ones (35, 36) to those which precede them in Psalm cvi., it seems much more probable that these Psalms were the originals from which David made selections, and formed them into one whole for the service of the occasion there recorded. The present Psalm is entitled in the Septuagint and Vulgate: "When the house was built after the Captivity, a Psalm of David;" probably from its having been used at the dedication of the second temple. It "is connected in style, sentiment and arrangement, with the preceding, of which it is an expansion. It begins with an exhortation to sing unto the Lord, in more amplified terms; and, like the former, celebrates His salvation; again magnifies the greatness of God, calls upon His people to worship Him, not merely with the general adoration of natural religion, but with sacrifices and gifts in His sanctuary. Then it recurs to the works of His hand, and calling upon the whole creation to join in the worship of the Creator, ends with an announcement of the future judgment."—*Jebb*. The imagery employed in the concluding verses seems, however, to point to the prevalence of the kingdom of God in the earth, rather than to the final judgment of mankind. "The Psalmist here," remarks A. Clarke, "in the true spirit of poetry, gives life and intelligence to universal nature, producing them all as

Seventy, who frequently *translate* proper names, have done so with these words wherever they occur; and their version is quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and followed by our translators here; but the allusion of the Psalmist would be more distinct if the Hebrew words were retained:—*Earden not your heart as at Meribah, as in the day of Massah in the wilderness.*

exulting in the reign of the Messiah, and the happiness which should take place in the earth, when the gospel should be universally preached." "As the promise which forms the basis of our Psalm is as yet unfulfilled in its whole extent,—the whole fulness of the heathen have not yet entered into the kingdom of God,—the Psalm is fraught with importance to us, not only in regard to its general thought, but even as to its very language. It is a *Missionary Hymn* for all ages of the Church, and it becomes more and more appropriate to our times, in proportion as the heathen begin to respond to the call, *Sing to the Lord a new song*; and in proportion as we find in the melancholy condition of the Church at home, occasion to look with a hopeful eye towards the heathen world."—*Hengstenberg*.

- 1 O SING unto the LORD a new song :  
Sing unto the LORD, all the earth.
- 2 Sing unto the LORD, bless his name ;  
Shew forth his salvation from day to day.
- 3 Declare his glory among the heathen,  
His wonders among all people.
- 4 For the LORD is great,  
And greatly to be praised :  
He is to be feared above all gods.
- 5 For all the gods of the nations are idols ;  
But the LORD made the heavens.
- 6 Honour and majesty are before him :  
Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.
- 7 Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people,  
Give unto the LORD glory and strength.
- 8 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name :  
Bring an offering and come into his courts.
- 9 Oh worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness :  
Fear before him, all the earth.

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PSALM xcvi. 5. *For all the gods of the nations are idols*; rather *vanities*, or *nothings*, as 1 Cor. viii. 4. The resemblance between the two words in the Hebrew forms a paranomasia which is lost in a translation :—*For all the elohim of the nations are elilim*.

7. "Here is a sudden change in the construction of the Psalm, one that is highly poetical in its character, and by which the effect of the chanting would be greatly increased, as this and the following verses would in all probability be taken up by a different part of the choir from that which had been previously engaged."—*Phillips*.

9. *Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness*; marginal, *glorious sanctuary*;

- 10 Say among the heathen *that* the LORD reigneth:  
 The world also shall be established,  
 That it shall not be moved :  
 He shall judge the people righteously.
- 11 Let the heavens rejoice,  
 And let the earth be glad ;  
 Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof.
- 12 Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein :  
 Then shall all the trees of the wood
- 13 Rejoice before the LORD :  
 For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth :  
 He shall judge the world with righteousness,  
 And the people with his truth.

## PSALM XCVII.

The old versions ascribe this and the two following, as well as the four preceding Psalms, to David. The Septuagint, followed by several others, entitles the present, "A Psalm of David when his land was established." The Syriac, "A prediction of the advent of Christ, and His final appearing." "The first part is a remarkable antistrophe to the whole of Psalm xciii., and all the sentiments of the preceding Psalm are repeated in this ; God's wonderful works, the confusion of the heathen, and His exaltation above all gods. There is an exhortation to righteousness corresponding to that at the end of Psalm xcv., but in a higher strain, with a more special commemoration of God's grace and mercy, and of religious joy."—Jebb.

- 1 THE LORD reigneth ; let the earth rejoice ;  
 Let the multitude of isles be glad *thereof*.

see on Psalm xxix. 2. The preference there expressed for the textual, rather than the marginal rendering is confirmed here by the difference in form between the words rendered *sanctuary* in verse 7, and *holiness* in the present verse, though derived from the same root.

PSALM xcvi. 1. *The Lord reigneth*. See introductory note on Psalm xcv. "The exclamation, *The Lord reigneth*, always sounds forth anew ; the Church will continue to call it out to the naked and to the clothed world, to the worshippers of wooden and of imaginary gods, till it shall have reached to full and absolute truth, and all the kingdoms of the earth have become the kingdoms of the Lord and His Anointed."—Hengstenberg. The word *isles* in Scripture frequently denotes distant coasts or regions. Here, *the earth* and *the multitude of isles* comprehend the whole habitable globe.

- 2 Clouds and darkness *are* round about him :  
Righteousness and judgment *are* the habitation of his throne.
- 3 A fire goeth before him,  
And burneth up his enemies round about.
- 4 His lightnings enlightened the world :  
The earth saw, and trembled.
- 5 The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD,  
At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
- 6 The heavens declare his righteousness,  
And all the people see his glory.
- 7 Confounded be all they that serve graven images,  
That boast themselves of idols :  
Worship him, all *ye* gods.
- 8 Zion heard, and was glad ;  
And the daughters of Judah rejoiced  
Because of thy judgments, O LORD.
- 9 For thou, LORD, *art* high above all the earth :  
Thou art exalted far above all gods.
- 10 Ye that love the LORD, hate evil :  
He preserveth the souls of his saints ;  
He delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.

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2. *Habitation*; rather *basis*, or *foundation*, as in Psalm lxxxix. 14; marginal, *establishment*. "The imagery here employed resembles that in Psalm xviii. 10, which alludes to the appearing of God on Mount Sinai, and which is frequently employed by the Hebrew poets when they wish to describe the advent of God, or the manifestation in any way of His power."—*Phillips*.

7. *Idols*; literally *vanities*, or *nullities*, as in Psalm xcvi. 5. *Worship him all ye gods*. The Seventy render—"all ye His angels," and their version is, in substance, quoted in Hebrews i. 6. The only passage where the Hebrew word is so rendered in our version is Psalm viii. 5 (where see note), and the context here requires it to be understood of *false deities*, whose humiliation, and that of their worshippers, is the subject on which the Psalmist is treating. "The false gods are called upon to worship through the medium of their servants, and they are also frequently viewed poetically as gifted momentarily with life and feeling, only for the purpose of exhibiting the Lord as triumphing over them; compare Ex. xii. 12, Num. xxxiii. 4, Isa. xix. 1."—*Hengstenberg*.

- 11 Light is sown for the righteous,  
 And gladness for the upright in heart.  
 12 Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous ;  
 And give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

## PSALM XCVIII.

## A Psalm.

This Psalm is entitled in the Syriac, "A Psalm of David respecting the release of the people from Egypt, but, spiritually, a prophecy of the advent of Christ, and the call of the Gentiles to the faith." The Hebrew title, simply *A Psalm*, or *Song*, may denote, as remarked by Hengstenberg, its being designed as "the lyrical accompaniment to the more decidedly prophetic Psalm which precedes." This Psalm bears a close resemblance throughout to Psalm xcvi., but "contains a more spiritual announcement, speaking of the salvation, righteousness, mercy and truth of God, manifested towards the house of Israel, while, as before, His universal empire is prophetically commemorated."—*Jebb*. The conclusion, like that of Psalm xcvi., appears to allude to that impartial justice which will accompany the prevalence of true Christian principles, and in which all parts of creation are called upon to rejoice.

- 1 O SING unto the LORD a new song ;  
 For he hath done marvellous things :  
 His right hand, and his holy arm,  
 Hath gotten him the victory.  
 2 The LORD hath made known his salvation :  
 His righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the  
 heathen.  
 3 He hath remembered his mercy and his truth  
 Toward the house of Israel.  
 All the ends of the earth  
 Have seen the salvation of our God.

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11. *Light*, as indicated by the context here, denotes *happiness*, or *prosperity*, as in Esther viii. 16, Isa. lix. 9. The use of the word *sown* in this connection is unusual but beautifully expressive, whether understood simply in the sense of prepared or reserved, as seed deposited in the ground, or that of scattered or dispersed. The rays of heavenly light and joy, dispersed like seed from the hand of the sower, find in the heart of the righteous a congenial soil.

"To you, ye good, to you alone  
 The seeds of heavenly light are sown,  
 That wake within the human breast  
 Joys ne'er by human tongue expressed."—*Merrick*.

- 4 Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth:  
Make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.
- 5 Sing unto the LORD with the harp ;  
With the harp, and the voice of a psalm.
- 6 With trumpets and sound of cornet  
Make a joyful noise before the LORD, the King.
- 7 Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof ;  
The world, and they that dwell therein.
- 8 Let the floods clap *their* hands :
- 9 Let the hills be joyful together before the LORD ;  
For he cometh to judge the earth :  
With righteousness shall he judge the world,  
And the people with equity.

#### PSALM XCIX.

The Syriac entitles this "A Psalm of David concerning the destruction of the Midianites, whom Moses and the Israelites took captive, and a prophecy of the glory of the kingdom of Christ." This Psalm "is antiphonal to Psalms xcvii. and xcv. in the same remarkable manner as Psalm xcviii. is to Psalm xcvi., and rising above the preceding in sentiment."—*Jebb*. "It opens, like Psalm xcvii., with, *The Lord reigneth*; celebrates His abode as King in Zion, and describes His Divine perfections; His greatness, justice, and mercy; each of these topics forming a distinct portion of the Psalm, concluding with a chorus of praise which terminates with the threefold ascription of *holiness to God*—verses 3, 5, 9. In the latter part, the Psalmist cites Moses, Aaron, and Samuel, as examples of obedience to God, through whose intercession He often forgave the people of Israel their iniquities."—*Phillips*.

- 1 THE LORD reigneth ;  
Let the people tremble :  
He sitteth *between* the cherubim ;  
Let the earth be moved.
- 2 The LORD *is* great in Zion ;  
And he *is* high above all the people.
- 3 Let them praise thy great and terrible name ;  
*For it is* holy.
- 4 The King's strength also loveth judgment ;

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PSALM xcix. 4. *The King's strength also loveth judgment.* "Although the strength of our King be infinite, yet it is never exerted but in righteousness and



- Thou dost establish equity,  
 Thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob.  
 5 Exalt ye the LORD our God,  
 And worship at his footstool ;  
 For he is holy.
- 6 Moses and Aaron among his priests,  
 And Samuel among them that call upon his name ;  
 They called upon the LORD, and he answered them.

just judgment, which are His delight. They compose the firm basis of His throne, and direct His whole administration."—*Bishop Horne*. If our version of this clause, which is also that of the generality of translators, ancient and modern, is correct, the foregoing is no doubt the sense intended ; but the mode of expressing it is very unusual. Luther renders :—"In the reign of this king, men love righteousness ;" but this is a mere paraphrase, and the sense it conveys does not seem easily deducible from the words of the text. A preferable mode of rendering perhaps is that suggested by *Dathe*, who connects these words with the preceding note of praise, observing that the clause, *If, or He, is holy*, was probably a response uttered by another part of the choir, thus :—

"Let them praise thy great and terrible name, (Response) Holy is He !  
 And the strength (or, power) of the king who loveth judgment."

Psalm cxxxvi. presents numerous instances of a like interruption of the sense by a responsive chorus ; see verses 7–22.

5. "*The footstool of the Lord* is the Ark of the Covenant which He who sitteth upon the cherubim (verse 1) touched as it were with His feet."—*Hengstenberg*.

6. The term *priests* is, by the poetical form, limited to Moses and Aaron, and the *calling upon God*, to Samuel, yet both terms may be understood as applying to the three, to all of whom the latter expression is extended in the last clause. "Aaron only was a priest in the usual sense," but "all are called priests who possess what constitutes the essence of the ordinary priestly office—inward connection with God, free access to the throne of grace, and the gift and power of intercessory prayer. This figurative idiom occurs even in the Law itself ; compare Ex. xix. 6, where it is said to all Israel, 'Ye shall be to me a kingdom of priests, a holy people.' That in certain circumstances, those who possessed this ideal priesthood were warranted in exercising all the functions of the ordinary priesthood, is evident from the example of Samuel, and in a certain measure also from that of Moses, who acted as priest during the seven days of the consecration of

- 7 He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar.  
 They kept his testimonies,  
 And the ordinance *that* he gave them.
- 8 Thou answeredst them, O LORD our God :  
 Thou wast a God that forgavest them,  
 Though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.
- 9 Exalt the LORD our God,  
 And worship at his holy hill ;  
 For the LORD our God *is* holy.

PSALM C.

A Psalm of praise [*or, thanksgiving*].

The Syriac entitles this Psalm, "Anonymous, concerning Joshua, the son of Nun, when he had ended the war of the Ammonites; but, in the New Testament, on the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith." Rosenmüller, after quoting the Chaldee title, "Praise at the offering of thanksgiving," justly remarks, that such inscriptions denote rather the use to which certain Psalms were subsequently appropriated, than the occasion or purpose for which they were originally composed. The Hebrew title, simply *A Psalm of praise* (or *thanksgiving*, as the same word is rendered in verse 4), may indicate a similar analogy between this and the preceding Psalm, as that remarked above in reference to Psalms xcvi. and xcviij. See Introductory

the common priests,—Lev. viii. Here, however, it is only the *calling upon God* that is considered as an essential part of the priestly office."—*Hengstenberg*.

7. "*From the pillar of cloud.* God spake not only to Moses (see Ex. xiii. 21 to xiv. 1, xix. 9, xxxiii. 9; Deut. xxxi. 15), but also to Aaron—Num. xii. 5. On the occasion there related, it was indeed in anger, but in anger beyond which grace was concealed. Samuel received Divine revelations in another form; but as the *matter* was common to him with Moses and Aaron, the *form*, which was peculiar to them, is transferred to him; or, the speaking of God in the pillar of cloud may be considered as a figurative expression of Divine revelation generally, taken from one of its original forms."—*Hengstenberg*.

8. The *them* in the two latter clauses at least, must be understood to refer to the *people*, who were represented by the three individuals mentioned. "The verse is a paraphrase of Ex. xxxiv. 7: 'A forgiving God wast thou to them for their infirmities, and an avenging One for their iniquities.' The sins of Moses and Aaron were altogether sins of infirmity, the result of the sins of the people, and their punishment was intended to strike at *them*: the history makes no mention, even of sins of infirmity, in the case of Samuel."—*Hengstenberg*.

Note to Psalm xcix. " This Psalm resembles in its expressions, as well as in its imagery, Psalm xcv., of which it is an epitome. The topics are similar. The rejoicing before the Lord (verses 1, 2), the recognition of Him as our Maker and our God, and the comparison of His people to sheep (verse 3) : while the concluding part, making a noble termination of the series, repeating the exhortation to praise and the recognition of God's mercy and everlasting truth, is an epitome of the former part of Psalm xcvi."—*Jebb*.

- 1 MAKE a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.
- 2 Serve the LORD with gladness :  
Come before his presence with singing.
- 3 Know ye that the LORD he is God ;  
*It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves ;*  
*We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*
- 4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,  
*And into his courts with praise :*  
Be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

PSALM C. 2. *Singing* ; more literally, *rejoicing* ; see on Psalm xcv. 1, where the Hebrew is the same as here.

3. *Not we ourselves*. Some versions have, *And His we are*, but the authorities greatly preponderate in favour of the textual reading. Jerome is cited in support of the variation, in which he no doubt followed the MSS. from which his own version of the Psalms was made ; but the Latin Vulgate, which was revised by him, and is also regarded as his version, concurs with all the others, except the Chaldee, and with the generality of Hebrew MSS., to establish the genuineness of the received text. The proposed emendation would merely anticipate the sentiment expressed in the succeeding clause ; while, on the other hand, the common reading, though in itself it may appear a mere truism, gives emphasis to the preceding words, " declaring that all we have comes from God ; that in ourselves we are nothing, but that in Him, we live, move, and have our being."—*Phillips*.

4. " Rabbi Menachem remarks on this verse, ' All sacrifices will be abolished, but the sacrifice of thanksgiving will remain.' "—*Phillips*. Hengstenberg, who considers that all the Psalms from Psalm xci. to Psalm c. belong to the same time and the same author, remarks, " that they are, on the territory of the psalm poetry, what the second part of Isaiah is, on the territory of prophecy ; and that we have in them a decalogue of Psalms intimately connected together. Two introductory ones of a general character stand at the head ; Psalm xci. an expression of joyful confidence in the help of God in all troubles and dangers : Psalm xcii., the greatness of God which brings on the destruction of the wicked and the salvation of the just. Psalm xciii. is then opened with the watchword, *the Lord reigneth*, which henceforth is uttered

5 For the LORD is good ;  
His mercy is everlasting ;  
And his truth endureth to all generations.

PSALM CI.

A Psalm of David.

"This Psalm is a perfect model according to which a wise prince should regulate his conduct and government ; and is supposed to have been composed by David on his accession to the throne."—*B.C.B.* Commentators have noticed an apparent incongruity between the first verse, in which the Psalmist seems to announce the mercy and judgment of God as the theme of his song, and the succeeding part, which contains no direct allusion to these topics. Hengstenberg's "explanation of this difficulty is, that we have in this and the two following, a trilogy of Psalms, the plan and connection of which is this,—If my children only remain in the ways of the Lord (Psalm ci. 2-8), they may confidently call upon Him in all trouble (Psalm cii.), and the end of the song shall always be, *Praise the Lord, oh my soul!*—Psalm ciii." It is more probable, however, that the present Psalm was composed independently of the other two, and Psalm cii. bears strong marks of a later period. Some refer the *mercy* and *judgment* to the exercise of those qualities by David towards his people, but the mode of expression here employed appears always to denote a joyful acknowledgment of the goodness of God ; compare Psalms xiii. 6, xxx. 4, 12, and particularly lxxxix. 1. The verse may therefore be regarded as an outpouring of the feelings of his heart, rather than an exact programme of the contents of the Psalm, which nevertheless exhibits very appropriately an outline of a course of conduct in the administration of his family and kingdom, worthy of one who had witnessed so much of God's mercy to himself, and of His judgments at least upon his enemies ; though if the date assigned to the Psalm is correct those upon himself were still to come..

- 1 I WILL sing of mercy and judgment :  
Unto thee, O LORD, will I sing.
- 2 I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way.  
Oh, when wilt thou come unto me ?  
I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.

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on all sides, and applied for comfort and exhortation. The whole ends in the exhortation addressed to the whole earth, to serve the Lord and praise Him, and to give Him glory for the abundant salvation which He imparts ; the full toned chorus of all nations and tongues who know that the Lord is God."

PSALM ci. 2. *Oh, when wilt thou come unto me?* The abruptness of this clause, as thus rendered, has induced some to connect it with the preceding : —*I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way, when thou shalt come to me ;* i.e., I shall be found walking in integrity, when thou shalt call me to account ; but it is doubtful whether the Hebrew particle *matai*, *when*, is ever used

- 3 I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes :  
 I hate the work of them that turn aside ;  
*It shall not cleave to me.*
- 4 A froward heart shall depart from me :  
 I will not know a wicked *person*.
- 5 Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour,  
 Him will I cut off :  
 Him that hath an high look and a proud heart  
 Will not I suffer.
- 6 Mine eyes *shall be* upon the faithful of the land,  
 That they may dwell with me :  
 He that walketh in a perfect way,  
 He shall serve me.
- 7 He that worketh deceit  
 Shall not dwell within my house :  
 He that telleth lies  
 Shall not tarry in my sight.
- 8 I will early destroy all the wicked of the land ;  
 That I may cut off all wicked doers  
 From the city of the Lord.

except in an interrogative sense, and the passage may be understood as an ejaculation for the Divine blessing on his upright course. "The affecting and anxious question," remarks Hengstenberg, "which follows immediately after the first words of the description of the pious resolution to render prominent the object of these resolutions, depends upon Exodus xx. 24, 'In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee and I will bless thee;' and is equivalent to—When wilt Thou, faithful to Thy promise, come to me and bless me; Thou who hast erected in Zion, *the city of the Lord* (verse 8), a memorial of Thy Name, and hast chosen it as the place of Thy sanctuary."

4. *Know*; i.e., *acknowledgment*, or *favour*; see Psalm i. 6.

5. *Slandereth*. The Hebrew is the same as the noun *tongue*—*he who tongue* *his neighbour*, i.e., uses his tongue to injure him. The Chaldee renders: "Who speaketh against his neighbour with the third, or triple, tongue." This is a common expression with the Targumists and Rabbinical writers, and is explained as signifying that the tongue of a detractor is, as it were, third between a man and his friend in disclosing his secrets; or that it destroys three persons, him who speaks, him who is spoken to, and him who is spoken of.

8. *Early*, or *diligently*; literally *every morning*, perhaps in allusion to morning as the time of judgment.

PSALM CII.

A Prayer of [*or, for*] the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the LORD.

This Psalm has been generally assigned to the close of the captivity, and though verses 13, 14, on which this opinion mainly rests, may be understood in a more general sense of the restoration of the Church from a state of extreme depression, yet these and the succeeding verses to verse 22 have a peculiar force and appropriateness when contemplated in reference to the circumstances connected with the release of the captive Jews. The Psalmist may be regarded either as expressing his individual sorrow for the afflictions of himself and his fellow-countrymen, or as describing in his own person the condition of his people. The Psalm has been attributed to Jeremiah, and to Nehemiah, as well as to Daniel. The former prophet is supposed to have died soon after the commencement of the captivity, and could not, in the usual course of nature, have witnessed its termination. Whether Daniel or Nehemiah was the author or not, is entirely a matter of conjecture; but some passages, especially verses 4, 9, and those above cited, appear to harmonize remarkably with Daniel ix. where we are told that the prophet having "understood by books the number of the years" which the Lord "would accomplish in the desolations of Jerusalem," set his "face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting and sackcloth and ashes," for her restoration.

- 1 HEAR my prayer, O LORD,  
And let my cry come unto thee.
- 2 Hide not thy face from me,  
In the day *when* I am in trouble;  
Incline thine ear unto me:  
In the day *when* I call answer me speedily.
- 3 For my days are consumed like smoke,  
And my bones are burned as an hearth.

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PSALM cii. 3. *My bones are burned as an hearth.* The Hebrew word denotes rather the *fuel*, or substance that is burned. Hengstenberg renders:—"My bones glow like a firebrand," and remarks, "The bones are mentioned as the foundation of corporeal existence, the interior fortress of the body: compare Psalms vi. 2, xxxi. 10, xlii. 10. The burning is not that of fever, but of pain: deep pain penetrates my marrow and bones, as if there were kindled in them a burning fire, and consumes me." The phraseology of this verse appears to be familiar in the East. "A person," remarks Roberts, "believing himself to be near death, says, in the bitterness of his soul, 'Alas! my days have passed away like smoke, my bones are burned as a fire-brand.'"—*Oriental Illustrations.*

- 4 My heart is smitten, and withered like grass :  
 So that I forget to eat my bread.  
 5 By reason of the voice of my groaning  
 My bones cleave to my skin.  
 6 I am like a pelican of the wilderness :  
 I am like an owl of the desert.  
 7 I watch, and am as a sparrow  
 Alone upon the house top.  
 8 Mine enemies reproach me all the day ;  
*And they that are mad against me are sworn against me.*

4. *So that*; more correctly, *for*; abstinence induced by sorrow, being the cause assigned for the condition described in the previous line. "The heart comes into notice as the seat of vital power: my vital power is exhausted, for in my deep distress I loath all food."—Hengstenberg.

5. *My bones cleave to my skin*; Hebrew, *to my flesh*. "An expression," remarks Phillips, "denoting a person to be extremely emaciated, and equivalent to our common saying, that such an one is nothing but skin and bone." But perhaps the view taken by Hengstenberg is the more correct one, who says, that in this and the parallel passage (Job xix. 20), "that state of weakness and relaxation of the bones is manifestly described which is brought on by severe pain and long-continued distress, when they lose their force and vigorous power of motion; they cleave to, or hang upon the flesh, as the feeble and exhausted tongue does in a beast of burden. Compare the opposite in Isa. lviii. 11, lvi. 14."

6. *A pelican of the wilderness*. Kitto writes of the pelican in his Illustrated Commentary, "We have often seen one sitting on the ledge of a rock, a foot or two above the surface of the water, in pensive silence during the whole day; the continuity of its proceedings being interrupted only at distant intervals by the near approach of some unlucky fish, upon which it darted with unerring certainty, and then resumed its wonted stillness. At other times we have observed them urging their way with rapid flight, thirty or forty miles into the country, after a day's fishing, to feast in the lonely wilderness upon the contents of their well-stored pouches; and were then reminded of the words: 'I am like a pelican of the wilderness.'"

7. *As a sparrow alone*; or, *a solitary bird*. The Hebrew word, which is the proper name of the sparrow, is also used as a general term for small birds, and in the present instance appears to allude to some bird of a less lively and more solitary habit than the common sparrow.

8. *They that are mad*, or, *they that rage*, or *vaunt against me*, *are sworn against me*; rather, *swear by me*, i.e., make me a byword, "a curse and an

- 9 For I have eaten ashes like bread,  
And mingled my drink with weeping,  
10 Because of thine indignation and thy wrath :  
For thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.  
11 My days *are* like a shadow that declineth ;  
And I am withered like grass.  
12 But thou, O LORD, shalt endure for ever ;  
And thy remembrance unto all generations.  
18 Thou shalt arise, *and* have mercy upon Zion :  
For the time to favour her,  
Yea, the set time, is come.  
14 For thy servants take pleasure in her stones,  
And favour the dust thereof.

oath," (as expressed, Num. v. 21, Jer. xxix. 22,) by imprecating my sufferings upon themselves, if they speak falsely or break their promise.

9. *For I have eaten ashes like bread* ; i.e., mourning has been my food : as a mourner sitting or lying in ashes, or, as expressed in Jer. vi. 26, " wallowing in ashes," may be said as it were to eat them. The phrases to " lick the dust " (Psalm lxxii. 9), and " dust shall be the serpent's meat " (Isa. lrv. 25), are analogous.

10. *Thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.* These words may either denote a state of adversity and humiliation, succeeding to one of prosperity and exaltation, or they may allude to the act of throwing a substance into the air to make it fall with greater force, as a storm, of wind lifts up the object it seizes, and dashes it to the ground.

11. Roberts, in illustration of this verse, adduces the following familiar phrases of the Hindoos. " ' My days are like a declining shadow,' says the old man ; ' My shadow is fast declining.' ' Alas ! his face and heart are withered.' ' My heart is withered, I cannot eat my food.' ' Sorrow, not age, hath withered my face.' "—*Oriental Illustrations*.

13. *The time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come.* The seventy years foretold as the term of the captivity are drawing to a close.—See Jer. xxv. 12 ; Daniel ix. 2 ; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21.

14. " The Jewish people here called *servants* in the sense of worshippers of the true God, are said to take pleasure in the stones or ruins which remained of the temple, thus showing how deep-rooted was their affection, and how much their best and most sacred feelings were associated with that house of God, in which they and their fathers had worshipped for many generations."—*Phillips*. " The more sad the desolation of the Church is, the less ought we to be alienated from its love."—*Calvin*.



- 15 So the heathen shall fear the name of the LORD,  
And all the kings of the earth thy glory.
- 16 When the LORD shall build up Zion,  
He shall appear in his glory.
- 17 He will regard the prayer of the destitute,  
And not despise their prayer.
- 18 This shall be written for the generation to come :  
And the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD.
- 19 For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary ;  
From heaven did the LORD behold the earth ;
- 20 To hear the groaning of the prisoner ;  
To loose those that are appointed to death ;
- 21 To declare the name of the LORD in Zion,  
And his praise in Jerusalem ;
- 22 When the people are gathered together,  
And the kingdoms, to serve the LORD.
- 23 He weakened my strength in the way ;  
He shortened my days.
- 24 I said, O my God,  
Take me not away in the midst of my days :  
Thy years *are* throughout all generations.
- 25 Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth :  
And the heavens *are* the work of thy hands.

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16. This verse may be rendered :—*For the Lord will build up Zion, He will appear in his glory.*

18. *The people which shall be created ; i.e., a future race, answering to the generation to come, in the previous line. In a spiritual or Messianic sense, it may signify a people hereafter to be received into the Church of God. "The whole paragraph" (verses 18–22), remarks Boothroyd, "has an implied reference to the coming and work of the Saviour, and the calling of all nations to the knowledge of God's salvation."*

23. *He weakened my strength in the way ; in the midst of my journey, or the attainment of my object. "The Psalmist, considering the length of the journey to the promised land, fears that neither strength nor life would be sufficient to accomplish it."—Boothroyd.*

25, 26. "Heaven and earth shall pass away as things that have been created, but the Lord shall remain as being He who created them. The

- 26 They shall perish, but thou shalt endure :  
 Yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment ;  
 As a vesture shalt thou change them,  
 And they shall be changed :  
 27 But thou *art* the same,  
 And thy years shall have no end.  
 28 The children of thy servants shall continue,  
 And their seed shall be established before thee.

PSALM CIII.

*A Psalm of David.*

Whether or no this Psalm was composed by David on the occasion of his intercourse with Bathsheba, its contents appear very appropriate to his circumstances when he had experienced the Divine forgiveness after his great transgression, especially if he had been visited with sickness, of which, however, we have no intimation in the sacred narrative.—See on Psalm xxxviii. “We have here before us the spirit and scheme (if the devout aspirations of a thankful heart may be treated of without injury in formal language) according to which the Psalmist of old was wont to conduct his eucharistic meditations. His voice of praise and thanksgiving, we observe, is just heard, where rightly and duly it had been at the first enkindled, in the quiet secret chambers of the heart. From this spring, the stream of gratitude, wending its salutary course through the various channels of personal and private mercies, presently swells into a feeling sense and participation of the Divine benefits imparted to the Church and community at large, whereof he was an individual member. As the stream enlarges, so naturally will enlarge the bed in which it flows. The course of the Psalmist’s thoughts and thanksgivings still widens and expands, until it includes, not the universal Church only, and the whole community of mankind, but angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven. Amidst this vast, unbounded expanse, still, however, is strictly and visibly preserved the sense of individual gratitude ; the individual sense of gratitude it is which thus fills the worlds. And, as the heart of David was the source whence, at the first, it took its rise, so the heart of David is the ocean into which, at the last, it returns : *Bless thou the Lord, O my soul.*”—*Forster quoted by Jebb.* “The Psalm bears the character of quiet tenderness. It is a still clear brook of the praise of God. In accordance with this, the verses are of equal length as to structure, and consist regularly of two members. It is only at the conclusion, where

comparison in the last clause refers to the ease with which a garment is laid aside.”—*Hengstenberg.*

28. *The children of thy servants shall continue ; Hebrew, dwell, or inhabit.* “An ellipsis is to be supplied, perhaps *Zion, or their own country.* In Mendelssohn’s *Beor* the verse is thus paraphrased :—‘Behold our children shall dwell in a land of rest, and the seed of thy servants shall be established before thee at the appointed time.’”—*Phillips.*

the tone rises, that the verses become longer ; the vessel is too small for the feeling."—*Hengstenberg*.

- 1 BLESS the LORD, O my soul :  
And all that is within me, *bless* his holy name.
- 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
And forget not all his benefits :
- 3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities ;  
Who healeth all thy diseases ;
- 4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction ;  
Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies ;
- 5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good *things* ;  
*So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.*

PSALM ciii. 1-5. In this beautiful soliloquy, especially in the latter part, the word *soul* must be understood in its most comprehensive import—*my whole self, or person*.—See on Psalm xvi. 10. *All that is within me* ; all my powers of mind, thought, and feeling.

3, 4. In accordance with the Scripture doctrine that death is the consequence of sin, diseases and infirmities of the body are represented as flowing from the same source, and restoration to health and strength is associated with its forgiveness, as in a spiritual sense it must ever be.—See Isa. xxxiii. 24 ; Matt. ix. 5, 6 ; Mark ii. 9-11.

5. *So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's* ; or more literally, *like the eagle*. This passage has given rise to many comments equally at variance with its true purport, and with the facts of natural history, of which Dr. A. Clarke adduces the following curious specimen from an old Psalter. "Newed sal be als of aeren the youthed. The arne, when he is greved with gretel elde, his neb waxis so gretely, that he may nogt open his mouth, and take mete ; but then he smytes his neb to the stane, and has away the slogh, and than he goes til mete, and he commes yonge agayne. Seva Christe duse away frans ourcelde of syn and mortalite, that settis us to ete our brede in hevене, and newes us in Hym." The plain English of all this is : "When the eagle is oppressed with old age, his bill grows so much that he cannot open his mouth in order to take meat. He then smites his bill against a stone, and breaks off the slough, the exorcence that prevented him from eating, and then he goes to his ordinary food and becomes young again. So Christ takes away from us our old age of sin and death, and gives us to eat that bread which comes down from heaven, and thus gives us a new life in Himself." The Psalmist no doubt alludes to the periodical renewal of their plumage by the feathered tribes, very appropriately instancing the eagle, not only as the king of birds, but also as remarkable for its longevity. "It is generally agreed that

- 6 The LORD executeth righteousness  
And judgment for all that are oppressed.
- 7 He made known his ways unto Moses,  
His acts unto the children of Israel.
- 8 The LORD is merciful and gracious,  
Slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.
- 9 He will not always chide:  
Neither will he keep *his anger* for ever.
- 10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins;  
Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.
- 11 For as the heaven is high above the earth,  
So great is his mercy toward them that fear him.
- 12 As far as the east is from the west,  
So far hath he removed our transgressions from us.
- 13 Like as a father pitieth *his* children,  
So the LORD pitieth them that fear him.
- 14 For he knoweth our frame;  
He remembereth that we *are* dust.
- 15 *As for* man, his days *are* as grass:  
As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.
- 16 For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone;  
And the place thereof shall know it no more.

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the eagle lives and retains its vigour and activity to a great age; and that, beyond the common lot of other birds, it moults in old age, renews its plumage, and appears as beautiful, strong, and lively, as before."—*B.C.B.*

12. *As far as the east is from the west, &c.* The Psalmist probably employed this comparison merely in a popular sense to express an immeasurable distance; but, viewed in the light which the discoveries of later ages have imparted to subjects of natural philosophy, it has a peculiar force and beauty. The north and south, being coincident with the axis of the earth's rotation, are definite points, which a circumnavigator, if there were no impediments to his progress, might reach and pass; but east and west are only relative terms, and he might proceed in either of those directions *ad infinitum*, without ever arriving at an extreme point.

14. *Our frame*; "our formation, the manner in which we are constructed, and the materials of which we are made."—*B.C.B.*

15. *Grass* may here be understood in the more general sense of *herbage*, answering to the *flower of the field* in the next line.

- 17 But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting  
 To everlasting upon them that fear him,  
 And his righteousness unto children's children ;
- 18 To such as keep his covenant,  
 And to those that remember his commandments to do them.
- 19 The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens ;  
 And his kingdom ruleth over all.
- 20 Bless the LORD, ye his angels,  
 That excel in strength, that do his commandments,  
 Harkening unto the voice of his word.
- 21 Bless ye the LORD, all *ye* his hosts ;  
 Ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.
- 22 Bless the LORD, all his works  
 In all places of his dominion :  
 Bless the LORD, O my soul.

## PSALM CIV.

"This sublime poem on the works of God in creation and providence is ascribed to David in the Septuagint, Vulgate, Ethiopic, Syriac, and Arabic versions; and, as it opens and closes with the same words as the preceding Psalm, it is probable that it was composed on the same occasion; and it is written as part of it in nine MSS."—*B.C.B.* Bishop Lowth, who considers this Psalm as closely resembling, in its poetical character, the *Idyl* of the Greeks, which he defines as a poem of moderate length, chiefly distinguished for elegance and sweetness, uniform, regular, and clear in style and arrangement, remarks, "Such is Psalm civ., which demonstrates the glory of the infinite Creator, from the wisdom, beauty and variety of His works. The poet embellishes this noble subject with the clearest and most splendid colouring of language, and with imagery the most magnificent, lively, diversified, and pleasing; at the same time select, and happily adapted to the subject. There is nothing of the kind extant; indeed, nothing can be conceived, more perfect than this hymn, whether it be considered with respect to its intrinsic beauties, or as a model of that species of composition. Miraculous exertions of the Divine power have something in them which at first strikes the inattentive mind with a strong sense of sublimity and awe; but the true subject of praise, the most worthy of God, and the best adapted to impress upon the heart of man a fervent and per-

21. *Ye his hosts*, may denote either heavenly intelligences, as *angels* in the previous verse, or the celestial orbs, which are comprehended in the terms of the next verse; where all creation, animate and inanimate, is called upon to swell the chorus of praise.

manent sense of piety, is drawn from the contemplation of His power in the creation of this infinite All, His wisdom in arranging and adorning it, His providence in sustaining, and His mercy in the regulation of its minutest parts, and in ordering and directing the affairs of men."—*Lectures*, vol. II. pp. 271–281. The Psalmist in the arrangement of his subjects follows nearly the order in which they are presented to us in Genesis i. : the first and second days of creation forming the topics of verses 2–5 ; the third, of verses 6–18 ; the fourth, of verses 19–23 ; the fifth, of verses 25, 26 ; and the seventh day being alluded to in verse 31. The subjects of the sixth day, man and beasts, are not treated separately, but in their relation to those of the third and fourth. The whole forms a magnificent *epanodos*, or introverted parallelism, divided into two equal parts by verse 18, and each subdivision or strophe of the first part answering to one of equal length, and more or less analogous in sense, but in an inverted order, in the second part. Thus :—

Verse 1. Exordium ; the Psalmist enjoins his soul to bless the Lord, and proposes as his theme, the honour and majesty of God as developed,

Verses 2–5, in the creation of light, the expansion of the firmament, the distribution and service of the elements, and the establishment of the world ;

Verses 6–9, the separation of the waters from the dry land ;

Verses 10–12, the watering of the valleys by springs,

Verses 13–17, and of the hills and the earth generally, by rain, for the sustenance of man and beast.

Verse 18. The centre of the poem, and point of transition, by which the Psalmist ascends from the high hills to,

Verses 19–23, the sun and moon, and their relation to, and influence upon, man and beast. He then descends,

Verses 24–26, to the sea and its inhabitants and passengers ;

Verses 27–30, declares the continual providence of God over all His works ; and in

Verses 31–34 closes the development of his theme, by declaring the everlasting glory of God, and His sovereignty over the world, and his determination to praise, meditate upon, and rejoice in Him.

Verse 35. In conclusion, he declares the transitory prosperity of the wicked, again enjoins his soul to bless the Lord, and exhorts all to join in the song of praise.

The Deity is spoken of alternately in the second and third person ; the respective portions having probably been sung in response by different parts of the choir.

1 BLESS the LORD, O my soul.

O LORD my God, thou art very great ;

Thou art clothed with honour and majesty.

2 Who coverest *thyself* with light as *with* a garment :

Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain :

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PSALM CIV. 2. There being nothing in the Hebrew answering to *thyself*, this verse would be more correctly rendered in the third person, the verbs being, like those in the succeeding verses, in the participial form ; *Who covereth*

- 3 Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters :  
 Who maketh the clouds his chariot :  
 Who walketh upon the wings of the wind :  
 4 Who maketh his angels spirits ;  
 His ministers a flaming fire :

*himself with light, &c.*, or more literally, and without any supplementary words : *Putting on light as a garment ; stretching out the heavens like a curtain.* Bishop Lowth supposes the phraseology of verses 2-5 to have been suggested by the construction of the tabernacle, the clothing and attendance of its ministers, the glory which rested upon it, and its perpetuity for the purpose designed (vol. I. pp. 177, &c.) ; but the Psalmist may rather have had in view the idea (on which, indeed, the *rationale* of the tabernacle itself appears to have been based) of royal dignity and state. "There lies at bottom," remarks Hengstenberg, "the figure of an earthly king, with his glorious garment, his high tower, his magnificent chariot, his splendid retinue of servants. What such an one does, shall be infinitely surpassed by the glory of the heavenly King. What, for example, is the garment of an earthly king, however much it may glitter with gold and precious stones, compared to the garment of light of the heavenly King ? We have before us in a poetical form, 'God said, Let there be light, and there was light.' The participles denote the continued action : God, whose work of creation is prolonged in providence, clothes Himself daily anew with light as with His garment ; and spreads out the heaven like a curtain with the same ease, by His mere word, with which a man spreads out a tent curtain. Isaiah xl. 22, is parallel :—'that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in.'"

3. "To construct out of the moveable waters, a firm palace, the cloudy heaven, 'firm as a molten mirror' (Job xxxvii. 18), is a magnificent work of Divine omnipotence."—*Hengstenberg.*

4. There is an ambiguity in the original of this verse, which may be rendered as by the Seventy, whose version is followed by our translators, and quoted by the apostle in Heb. i. 7, as well adapted to his purpose of declaring the superiority of the Son to all created beings ; or thus : "Who maketh the winds, or spirits, his messengers ; a flaming fire his ministers" (*B.C.B.*), which appears more in unison with the object of the Psalmist, as representing the elements and all the powers of nature, as subservient to the will of the Creator ; or, *Who maketh the winds his angels, or messengers, the flaming fire (lightnings) his ministers ;* parallel with Psalm cxlviii. 8, "stormy wind fulfilling his word." From whatever source the Psalmist may have drawn his imagery, the poetic beauty and sublimity of these verses stand unsurpassed, if not unrivalled.

- 5 *Who laid the foundations of the earth,  
That it should not be removed for ever.*
- 6 *Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment :  
The waters stood above the mountains.*
- 7 *At thy rebuke they fled ;  
At the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.*
- 8 *They go up by the mountains ;  
They go down by the valleys  
Unto the place which thou hast founded for them.*
- 9 *Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over ;  
That they turn not again to cover the earth.*
- 10 *He sendeth the springs into the valleys,  
Which run among the hills.*

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5. "We must consider this verse in no other light than a poetical account of the construction of the earth, designed to teach us no other truth than that this our planet is made in every respect with so much perfection, like its Divine Creator, that for form and durability and material, it is adapted to answer the purpose and to last the time intended. It is strange that some divines, and those not of remote date, should think of citing this verse as militating against the Copernican system of the earth's motion. Unhappily there are many pious and well meaning Christians, who seem bent on forgetting, to the great detriment of revealed religion, that the object of the Bible is to make known to us, not the truths of natural philosophy, but our moral condition."—*Phillips*.

7. *At thy rebuke they fled*; at the command of the Creator (Gen. i. 9): "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear." *At the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.* *Thunder* is frequently called the voice of God, but, as it is not mentioned in the Mosaic account of the creation, the expression here may simply denote *thy powerful, or majestic, voice*.

8. This verse is rendered by some: *The mountains go up, the valleys go down*, as referring to the formation of hills and valleys, or their appearance as the waters retired; but the common version seems preferable, the waters being the subject of the whole clause, verses 6-9.

10. "The waters of the sea are not only prevented from destroying the earth, but are rendered the means of preserving every living thing: partly ascending from the great deep through the strata of the earth, partly exhaled in vapour from the surface of the ocean, and thence falling in rain, especially on the tops and sides of mountains, they break forth into fresh springs, and form streams and rivers."—*B.C.B.*



- 11 They give drink to every beast of the field :  
The wild asses quench their thirst.
- 12 By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation,  
Which sing among the branches.
- 13 He watereth the hills from his chambers :  
The earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.
- 14 He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle,  
And herb for the service of man :  
That he may bring forth fruit out of the earth ;
- 15 And wine *that* maketh glad the heart of man,  
And oil to make *his* face to shine,  
And bread *which* strengtheneth man's heart.
- 16 The trees of the LORD are full of *sap* ;  
The cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted ;
- 17 Where the birds make their nests :  
*As for* the stork, the fir trees *are* her house.
- 18 The high hills *are* a refuge for the wild goats ;  
And the rocks for the conies.

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14. *And herb for the service, i.e., use, of man*; or, as it may perhaps be more correctly rendered, *for the work of man*, in tilling the ground, in order to bring forth food out of the earth.

16. *The trees of the Lord.* This expression appears here not only to denote excellence, as in other instances, when applied to natural productions, but more especially to point to the luxuriance of vegetation in the primeval forests or other localities assigned them by the Creator, answering to the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted, in the next line.

18. *The conies*; Hebrew *shaphan*, supposed by Bochart and others to be the jerboa; but the opinion of Bruce is now generally adopted, who identifies it with the *ashkoko* of the Ethiopians and the *wabber* of the Arabs, an animal about the size of a rabbit, frequenting rocks, and common also in various parts of Palestine, where it has acquired the name of Ganam Israel, or the Lamb of Israel; the reason of which name, remarks Dr. Kitto, "it is difficult to conjecture, unless from its abundance among the rocks of that stony wilderness where the Israelites wandered for forty years. The characteristics of the Scripture *shaphan* correspond fully with those of the Ganam Israel, but not of the jerboa, or of the coney, or rabbit, which, moreover, is very rare, if it exists at all, in Palestine."—See *Kitto's Natural History of Palestine, and Biblical Cyclopædia*.

- 19 He appointed the moon for seasons :  
The sun knoweth his going down.
- 20 Thou makest darkness, and it is night :  
Wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.
- 21 The young lions roar after their prey,  
And seek their meat from God.
- 22 The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together,  
And lay them down in their dens.
- 23 Man goeth forth unto his work,  
And to his labour, until the evening.
- 24 O LORD, how manifold are thy works !  
In wisdom hast thou made them all :  
The earth is full of thy riches.
- 25 So is this great and wide sea,  
Wherein *are* things creeping innumerable,  
Both small and great beasts.
- 26 There go the ships : *there is* that leviathan,  
*Whom* thou hast made to play therein.
- 27 These wait all upon thee ;  
That thou mayest give *them* their meat in due season.
- 28 *That* thou givest them they gather :  
Thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.

22, 23. The Psalmist appears not only to contrast the habits of beasts of prey with those of man, but also to recognize therein the ordering of a kind Providence, that the former, after roaming in the night for their food, retire on the approach of day to their coverts, so that man may pursue his daily labour unmolested by them.

26. *Leviathan*. This word appears to signify, according to its etymology, a *twisted animal*, and to be used as a general term for large saurians or serpents. In Job xli. and Psalm lxxiv. 14, it is generally agreed to denote the crocodile, and in Isaiah xxvii. 1, it is expressly identified with some kind of serpent. In the present instance, it clearly designates an inhabitant of the deep, but whether the whale, as has generally been supposed, seems doubtful, though nothing can better suit the tenor of the passage than—

“That sea beast

Leviathan, which God of all His works  
Created hugest that swim the ocean stream.”

*Milton's Paradise Lost*, book I. line 200.

- 29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled :  
 Thou takest away their breath, they die,  
 And return to their dust.
- 30 Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created :  
 And thou renewest the face of the earth.
- 31 The glory of the LORD shall endure for ever :  
 The LORD shall rejoice in his works.
- 32 He looked on the earth, and it trembleth :  
 He toucheth the hills, and they smoke.
- 33 I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live :  
 I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.
- 34 My meditation of him shall be sweet :  
 I will be glad in the LORD.
- 35 Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth,  
 And let the wicked be no more.  
 Bless thou the LORD, O my soul.  
 Praise ye the LORD.

## PSALM CV.

Some suppose that the former part of this Psalm, which is found, with little variation, in 1 Chron. xvi., was composed by David on the removal of the ark to Mount Zion there recorded, but it is more probable that the Psalm stands here as originally composed, and that a portion of it, with others, was selected by David for the occasion referred to.—See on Psalm xcvi.

30. *Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created; i.e., others in the place of those that die.* The expression is equivalent to that of Gen. ii. 7: "God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." According to the doctrine of Scripture, all life, not only what is immaterial and spiritual, but also what is physical, is from God, "the fountain of life, the God of the spirits of all flesh."—*Hengstenberg.*

31, 32. "In verse 32 we have the basis of the confidence expressed in verse 31—the omnipotence of God, according to which He can easily prevent every deterioration of the creature from its original condition. Should the earth presume to depart from the course of its destination, a single look of the Almighty is sufficient to bring it back to trembling obedience; should the mountains refuse to render their service, the Lord requires only to touch them in order to humble them."—*Hengstenberg.* The expressions of the Psalmist may allude to the extraordinary manifestations of the Divine presence at Mount Sinai (Ex. xix. 16–18), or to the natural phenomena of earthquakes, thunder, and lightning.

1. O GIVE thanks unto the LORD ;  
Call upon his name :  
Make known his deeds among the people.
- 2 Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him :  
Talk ye of all his wondrous works.
- 3 Glory ye in his holy name :  
Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD :
- 4 Seek the LORD, and his strength :  
Seek his face evermore.
- 5 Remember his marvellous works that he hath done ;  
His wonders, and the judgments of his mouth ;
- 6 O ye seed of Abraham his servant,  
Ye children of Jacob his chosen.
- 7 He is the LORD our God :  
His judgments are in all the earth.
- 8 He hath remembered his covenant for ever,  
The word which he commanded to a thousand generations :
- 9 Which covenant he made with Abraham,  
And his oath unto Isaac ;
- 10 And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law,  
And to Israel for an everlasting covenant :
- 11 Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan,  
The lot of your inheritance :

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PSALM CV. 2. *Talk ye*; "or *meditate ye*; meditate on His wonderful works or miracles, that you may talk of them as from the abundance of the heart."—B.C.B.

4. Some consider the expression *his strength*, here, as in Psalm lxxviii. 6 (where see note), as equivalent to "the ark of thy strength," in 2 Chron. vi. 41, and Psalm cxxxii. 8, in which case the purport of the line would be, *Worship God in his sanctuary*; but it may be taken in a more general sense:—*Seek the Lord, and his powerful help, or saving might*; or the word may be construed as a verb:—*Seek the Lord, and be strong*. So most of the old versions.

8. "In 1 Chron. xvi. 16, the Psalmist exhorts the people to be mindful of the covenant which Jehovah had made with their fathers; but here he teaches them to praise God for having always remembered it."—B.C.B. For the covenant and promises referred to in this and several succeeding verses, as made to Abraham, see Gen. xii. 1-7; xiii. 14-17; xv; xvii. 1-8, 15-19; xxii. 15-18; to Isaac, Gen. xxvi. 2-5; and to Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 10-15; xxxii. 24-28; xxxv. 9-12.

- 12 When there were *but* a few men in number :  
Yea, very few, and strangers in it.
- 13 When they went from one nation to another,  
From *one* kingdom to another people ;
- 14 He suffered no man to do them wrong :  
Yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes ;
- 15 *Saying*, Touch not mine anointed,  
And do my prophets no harm.
- 16 Moreover he called for a famine upon the land :  
He brake the whole staff of bread.
- 17 He sent a man before them, *even* Joseph,  
*Who* was sold for a servant :
- 18 Whose feet they hurt with fetters :  
He was laid in iron :

13-15. In these verses the Psalmist alludes to the journeyings of the patriarchs, and especially to the sojournings of Abraham and Isaac in Egypt and Philistia, and the charge of God to Abimelech respecting the former, in Gen. xx. 6, 7. "The *anointing*," remarks Hengstenberg, "is, in the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament, the standing symbol and type of the communication of the gifts of the Spirit; *mine anointed*, therefore the vessels of my Spirit, the hearers of my revelation. Compare Gen. xli. 38, where Pharaoh says of Joseph, 'Can we find such an one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?'" Under the Jewish economy, kings, priests, and prophets were anointed on their institution to office. The latter term is here, as in the passage in Gen. xx. 7, used in a general sense of persons particularly favoured with Divine communications.

16. "Bread is called the staff of life, because it is that especially by which the human body is nourished, and man's physical strength recruited, and so, to express the virtue of this aliment of the human frame, we have the phrase *staff of bread*, employed figuratively to denote bread itself."—*Phillips*.

17. *He sent a man before them*. "Now therefore," said Joseph to his brethren, "be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life."—Gen. xlv. 5.

18. *He was laid in iron*; literally, *his soul came into iron*; soul being a frequent Hebraism for the whole person, and here indicating the mental, as well as physical suffering to which the captive was subjected. Joseph is said, in Gen. xl. 3, to have been *bound* in prison, and, though the term may be understood simply in the sense of *confined*, yet, considering the charge on which he was committed, and the ordinary mode of securing prisoners,

- 19 Until the time that his word came :  
     The word of the LORD tried him.  
 20 The king sent and loosed him ;  
     *Even* the ruler of the people, and let him go free.  
 21 He made him Lord of his house,  
     And ruler of all his substance :  
 22 To bind his princes at his pleasure ;  
     And teach his senators wisdom.

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there seems no reason to doubt that the Psalmist's description in this verse was literally realized, at least in the early part of Joseph's imprisonment, till his excellent conduct had so fully acquired the favour and confidence of his gaoler, that he appears to have been treated more as a prisoner at large.

19. This verse is rendered by Green:—"Until the time of his prediction had come to pass, and the word of Jehovah had cleared him." "The first clause," remarks Kennicott, "refers to the completion of his interpretations of the dreams of the chief butler and baker; the second, to the interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams, called the oracle of Jehovah, because sent by Him to Pharaoh." Joseph, however, was indebted for his interpretation of all the dreams to the special influence of God; and the expression *his word*, in the first line, may be regarded as synonymous with *the word of the Lord*, in the second (a transposition of the relative and antecedent, as remarked on Psalms xxviii. 8; xxix. 6); and may denote either the Divine influence endowing him with that spirit of wisdom and prescience which led to his release from an unjust imprisonment, and elevation to dignity and power, agreeably to the remark of Pharaoh, already quoted, "Can we find such an one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" or to the fulfilment of the Divine purpose in so ordering the course of events as to effect this consummation.

20. In the second line, *sent* must be understood from the first, *the ruler of the people (sent)*, &c. The insertion of *even* is no improvement either to the sound or sense.

22. Instead of *to bind*, the old versions, probably by a change of one letter in the Hebrew, have *to instruct*, but, though this is very appropriate to the circumstances, and accordant with the next line, the word *bind* is not less so, in a general sense, as expressive of the unlimited authority conferred by the monarch upon Joseph. In this verse there appears to be a designed coincidence of expression, and, at the same time, contrast in sense, with verse 18. He who had been *bound in fetters, and his soul had come into iron*, had now the power to bind the nobles of the kingdom, literally, according to his soul, i.e., at his pleasure.

- 23 Israel also came into Egypt ;  
 And Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.  
 24 And he increased his people greatly ;  
 And made them stronger than their enemies.  
 25 He turned their heart to hate his people,  
 To deal subtilly with his servants.  
 26 He sent Moses, his servant ;  
 And Aaron, whom he had chosen.  
 27 They showed his signs among them,  
 And wonders in the land of Ham.  
 28 He sent darkness, and made it dark ;  
 And they rebelled not against his word.

23—27. The ordinary Hebrew name for Egypt is Mizraim, having been, it is supposed, founded by Mizraim, one of the sons of Ham ; but it is here, as in Psalms lxxviii. 51, and cvi. 22, also called by the name of his father, and Jerome observes, that it was called in his day, in the Egyptian language, by the name of Ham ; but whether from the son of Noah, or from a similar word in that language, signifying black, is uncertain. Possibly Ham, as well as his son, may have taken up his abode there.

25. *He turned their heart, &c.*, “in order that He might furnish an opportunity for the display of His wonderful power.”—*Hengstenberg*. “The Chaldee and Arabic have rendered the verb intransitively, *their heart was turned*. Chrysostom says that *He turned*, is the same as *He permitted to turn*. Eusebius observes that God’s turning the heart of the Egyptians to hate His people, was but a just punishment of the Israelites for abandoning the worship of the true God, and embracing idolatry ; but this does not appear in the history. The intransitive is preferable here.”—*Phillips*.

28. The Psalmist, in this and the following verses, enumerates all the plagues except the fifth and sixth (the murrain, and boils and blains), but not strictly in the order of their occurrence ; commencing with the ninth, and reversing the third and fourth (lice and flies). The words here, *and they rebelled not against his word*, have been considered to present some difficulty, for the plague of darkness, as well as those which preceded it, was ineffectual thoroughly to subdue the rebellious spirit of the Egyptians, or at least, of their king. Several of the old versions read, omitting the negative—*And, or for, they rebelled against his word* ; but these variations are unsupported by any Hebrew MS., and have probably originated in a design to obviate the objection presented by the genuine reading. Some refer the line to Moses and Aaron, an application of it which is quite irrelevant ; for, so far from being chargeable with rebellion from the time of their accepting,

- 29 He turned their waters into blood,  
And slew their fish.  
30 Their land brought forth frogs in abundance,  
In the chambers of their kings.  
31 He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies,  
And lice in all their coasts.  
32 He gave them hail for rain,  
And flaming fire in their land.

though, in the first instance, with some reluctance, from diffidence on the part of Moses, the Divine commission to deliver their nation from bondage, it was through their instrumentality, in obedience to the successive commands of God, that most of the plagues were inflicted, and the Egyptians were faithfully warned of their approach. Hengstenberg understands the darkness figuratively, of the Divine wrath manifested throughout the series of plagues; but, not to insist on the improbability that the Psalmist, in so prominently and emphatically mentioning darkness, should not intend specifically to refer to what, in the literal sense of the word, constituted one of the most striking and awful of those visitations, this exposition does not lessen the difficulty; for though

“ With ten wounds  
The river-dragon tamed at length submits  
To let his sojourners depart, and oft  
Humbles his stubborn heart ;” yet he is “ still, as ice  
More hardened after thaw ; till, in his rage  
Pursuing whom he late dismiss’d, the sea  
Swallows him with his host.”

*Milton's Paradise Lost*, book XII. line 190.

Other solutions have been proposed, but founded on more or less strained interpretations of the original text ; and it seems most satisfactory to understand the passage as referring to the partial or temporary submission produced by the course of Divine chastisements, of which that of darkness was nearly the consummation, especially on the mind of the people, as evinced by their remonstrance with their obdurate monarch (Ex. x. 7), and their subsequent disposition to grant to the Israelites such things as they required.

29. *And slew their fish.* *Killed*, or *caused to die*, would be more appropriate, as well as a more literal rendering. *Slaying* implies the use of a weapon, or at least, the exercise of violence.

31. *Flies* ; see on Psalm lxxviii. 45.

32. *He gave them hail for rain.* The land of Egypt, watered by the overflowings of the Nile, is not subject to rain ; but, on this occasion, instead of



- 33 He smote their vines also and their fig trees;  
 And break the trees of their coasts.  
 34 He spake and the locusts came,  
 And caterpillars, and that without number,  
 35 And did eat up all the herbs in their land,  
 And devoured the fruit of their ground.  
 36 He smote also all the firstborn in their land,  
 The chief of all their strength.  
 37 He brought them forth also with silver and gold :  
 And *there was* not one feeble *person* among their tribes.  
 38 Egypt was glad when they departed :  
 For the fear of them fell upon them.  
 39 He spread a cloud for a covering ;  
 And fire to give light in the night.  
 40 *The people* asked, and he brought quails,  
 And satisfied them with the bread of heaven.  
 41 He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out ;  
 They ran in the dry places *like* a river.  
 42 For he remembered his holy promise,  
 And Abraham his servant.  
 43 And he brought forth his people with joy,  
 And his chosen with gladness :  
 44 And gave them the lands of the heathen :  
 And they inherited the labour of the people ;

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the fertilizing showers common in other countries, "the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground, and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt."—Ex. ix. 23.

34. The *caterpillar* is not mentioned in the history of the plagues, and the word so rendered here, as well as that in Psalm lxxviii. 46, probably denotes some species of locust.

36. See on Psalm lxxviii. 51.

37. *He brought them forth also with silver and gold* ; the "jewels of silver, and jewels of gold," which they had borrowed, or *asked*, of the Egyptians.—Ex. xi. 2, xii. 35, 36.

40. See Psalm lxxviii. 24, where the manna is termed "the corn of heaven."

44. *The labour of the people* ; i.e., the produce of their labour ; the cities and houses they had built, the vineyards they had planted.

45 That they might observe his statutes,  
And keep his laws.  
Praise ye the Lord.

PSALM CVI.

See on Psalm xvi. Whether this and the preceding Psalm were composed at the same time or not, if the view taken of 1 Chron. xvi. is correct, they were both composed previously to the transactions there recorded, and, most probably, by David. Though bearing a close analogy to each other, yet each appears to have its distinct object; the one, as announced in the opening verses, "to awaken the Church to joyful hope for the future, by the consideration of the wonders of God in the past" (*Hengstenberg*); the other, more especially, to confess the sins of the present generation (verse 6), to hold forth to the people a solemn warning, in a vivid representation of the murmurings and rebellions of their forefathers, and, at the same time, "to awaken them to a lively consciousness of the truth, that, though there is much of sin in us, there is much more of grace in God."—*Hengstenberg*. The historic ground common to both is somewhat extended in furtherance of these several objects; Psalm cv. embracing the Divine favour, manifested in the antecedent history of the patriarchs, and the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and closing with the obtaining of the promised land; Psalm cvi. commencing with the Exodus from Egypt, and dwelling on the continued transgressions of the people after their settlement in Canaan. Those who assign this Psalm to the period of the Babylonish captivity, ground their opinion mainly on verse 47, but this is one of those which occur also in the hymn of David (1 Chron. xvi.); and standing, as it does here, in immediate connection with an allusion to the oppressions in the times of the judges, may simply imply a more complete deliverance from the power of the Philistines, and other hostile neighbours, than had hitherto been experienced, and, above all, from the *spirit* of the heathen. Psalm lxxviii., both in its general purport and its phraseology, strongly resembles these two Psalms, dwelling, like the latter, more particularly upon the disobedience and provocation of the people. The first clause of verse 1—*Praise ye the Lord*, Hebrew *Hallelujah*, which does not appear in the parallel passage (1 Chron. xvi. 34), is written as a title to the Psalm in several of the ancient versions.

- 1 PRAISE ye the LORD.  
Oh give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is good*:  
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- 2 Who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD?  
*Who* can shew forth all his praise?
- 3 Blessed *are* they that keep judgment,  
*And* he that doeth righteousness at all times.

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PSALM cvi. 3. The old versions, and many Hebrew MSS., read the second line, like the first, in the plural:—*they that do righteousness at all times*.

- 4 Remember me, O LORD,  
With the favour *that thou bearest unto thy people* ;  
O visit me with thy salvation :
- 5 That I may see the good of thy chosen,  
That I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation,  
That I may glory with thine inheritance.
- 6 We have sinned with our fathers,  
We have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.
- 7 Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt ;  
They remembered not the multitude of thy mercies ;  
But provoked *him* at the sea, *even* at the Red Sea.
- 8 Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake,  
That he might make his mighty power to be known.
- 9 He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was dried up :  
So he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness.
- 10 And he saved them from the hand of him that hated *them*,  
And redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.
- 11 And the waters covered their enemies :  
There was not one of them left.
- 12 Then believed they his words ;  
They sang his praise.

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4, 5. Most of the old versions and a very few Hebrew MSS. have the plural here also: *Remember us*, &c., but the singular is probably the genuine reading, the Psalmist speaking in the name of the whole Church, or of each individual member.

7. *Our fathers understood not* ; rather, *regarded not*. But *provoked him at the sea*. *Provoked thee*, would have been better, the change of person commencing with the next verse ; but the line may be correctly rendered without the insertion of either pronoun, or of *even* (the favourite expletive of our translators) in the next clause:—*But rebelled at the sea, at the Red Sea* ; or, still more literally, *at the Sea, in the Red Sea* ; intimating, as some suppose, that the spirit of murmuring manifested by the Israelites, when they beheld the sea before them, and the Egyptians behind (Ex. xiv. 8–12), continued even when, after a passage had been miraculously opened for them, they “walked on dry ground in the midst of the sea.” This, however, does not appear in the narrative, and the two prepositions may be considered synonymous, the latter being frequently used in the sense of *by*, or *at*.

12. *Then believed they his words* ; *they sang his praise*. “And Israel saw

- 13 They soon forgot his works ;  
They waited not for his counsel :
- 14 But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness,  
And tempted God in the desert.
- 15 And he gave them their request ;  
But sent leanness into their soul.
- 16 They envied Moses also in the camp,  
And Aaron, the saint of the LORD.
- 17 The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan,  
And covered the company of Abiram,

that great work, which the Lord did upon the Egyptians ; and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses. Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord," &c.—Ex. xiv. 31, xv. 1.

13. *They waited not for his counsel.* After journeying three days in the wilderness of Sin, without water, and being disappointed by the bitterness of the waters of Marah, instead of seeking the Divine counsel and direction, they broke out again in murmurings against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?"—Ex. xv. 24.

14. *But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness.* "And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting : and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat ?" &c.—Num. xi. 4.

15. Several of the old versions read, instead of *leanness*—*satiety*, or *surfeit*, which accords well with Num. xi. 20, where Moses promises the people that they should eat flesh till it became loathsome unto them ; but the sense of the Hebrew word, as it stands, *leanness*, *wasting*, or *mortal disease*, is no less in unison with the history. "The *soul*," remarks Hengstenberg, "is the animal food-needing soul," which complained of being dried up (Num. xi. 6), and loathed the manna as light bread.—Num. xxi. 5. "This soul, while it desired to be satisfied and filled with this bounty, got its wish ; but, at the same time, in spite of this gift, it got also the opposite, and its own punishment ; for immediately there came on wasting sickness, which at last ended in death."—See Num. xi. 33, Psalm lxxviii. 31.

16. *Aaron, the saint, or holy one, of the Lord.* "*Holy* does not denote a moral property, but the office which he held, his nobility. Compare Num. xvi. 3, where the rebels say, 'Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them ;' verses 5, 7, where Moses answers them, 'To-morrow the Lord will shew who are his, and who is holy ; and the man whom the Lord doth choose, he shall be holy.'"—Hengstenberg.

17, 18. "The rebellion was followed by a double punishment ; the first fell

- 18 And a fire was kindled in their company ;  
The flame burned up the wicked.
- 19 They made a calf in Horeb,  
And worshipped the molten image.
- 20 Thus they changed their glory  
Into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass.
- 21 They forgot God their saviour,  
Which had done great things in Egypt ;
- 22 Wondrous works in the land of Ham,  
And terrible things by the Red Sea.
- 23 Therefore he said that he would destroy them,  
Had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach,  
To turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy *them*.
- 24 Yea, they despised the pleasant land,  
They believed not his word :

upon the non-Levitical portion of the rebels, the Kenbenites, Dathan and Abiram and their company, who were swallowed up by the earth ; the second, upon the Levitical portion, the 250 men who offered incense, with Korah at their head. These had sinned by fire, and were punished by fire, like the sons of Aaron—Lev. x. 2.”—*Hengstenberg*. See Num. xvi., xxvi. 10, 11.

20. “*Their glory*; the God who had lifted them up from the dust of debasement to the glory of the children of God, and had distinguished them above all other nations. Compare Deut. iv. 6–8; x. 21.—‘He is thy praise (thy glory), thy God who hath done to thee this great and terrible thing which thine eyes have seen.’ They made, contrary to the prohibition (Ex. xx. 4, 5), a calf intended to represent an ox. They would gladly have made an ox, but they were not able to get this length, so contemptible was the undertaking. They had intended to worship Jehovah under the symbol of the calf, or the bull, which they borrowed from the Egyptians; but as this symbolizing was incompatible with the nature of Jehovah, they did in reality by it give up the Lord altogether.”—*Hengstenberg*.

22. See on Psalm cv. 27.

23. The length of this verse harmonizes with its important position. Long verses occur in our Psalms only where prominence is intended to be given to some important point. *Stood before him in the breach*; like a warrior who covers with his body the broken part of the wall of a besieged city. The weapon with which Moses defended the spiritual city was intercessory prayer.—Compare Ex. xxxii. 11–14, Deut. ix. 18, 19.

24. *They despised the pleasant land*. “A good land and a large, a land

- 25 But murmured in their tents,  
*And hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD.*  
 26 Therefore he lifted up his hand against them,  
 To overthrow them in the wilderness :  
 27 To overthrow their seed also among the nations,  
 And to scatter them in the lands.  
 28 They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor,  
 And ate the sacrifices of the dead.

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flowing with milk and honey.”—Ex. iii. 8. “A land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven ; a land which the Lord thy God careth for,” &c.—Deut. xi. 11, 12. *They believed not his word, “who had promised to bring them into it, but rather the report of the faithless spies.”*—*Hengstenberg.*

26. *Therefore he lifted up his hand against them.* This phrase may import either preparing to strike, or the act of swearing, as in Gen. xiv. 22. That the latter is the sense here intended, appears from the narrative of what took place on the return of the spies.—See Num. xiv. 23, 28, 30 ; Deut. i. 34, 35, as well as the parallel passage, Psalm xcv. 11.

27. “The determination against *their seed* was not expressed at that time, but on another occasion. It was, however, implied in the determination against the fathers, and is here with propriety deduced from it.”—*Hengstenberg.* See Lev. xxvi. and Deut. xxviii., which contain threatenings to this effect, as the consequence of disobedience on the part of succeeding generations.

28. *They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, or the lord of Peor*, a name given to Kemosh, the idol of the Moabites, from Mount Peor, one of the places where he was worshipped. The Psalmist in this and the three following verses refers to the narrative in Num. xxv., where we read that while “Israel abode in Shittim, the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab ; and they called them unto the sacrifices of their gods, and the people did eat and bowed down to their gods, and Israel joined himself to Baal-peor.” The Psalmist says, *They ate the sacrifices of the dead.* The idols may be called *the dead*, either because they were generally men, warriors, or others who had been deified after death, or simply, in opposition to the living God. Some think that sacrifices in honour of the dead are intended, as the victims offered by the Greeks and Romans to the Stygian Jove ; but nothing of this appears in the history, to the facts of which the Psalmist throughout closely adheres. It was usual for the offerers to *eat* a large portion of the sacrifices, a custom alluded to by the apostle—1 Cor. viii. 7-10 ; x. 28.

- 29 Thus they provoked *him* to anger with their inventions:  
And the plague brake in upon them.
- 30 Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment:  
And *so* the plague was stayed.
- 31 And that was counted unto him for righteousness  
Unto all generations for evermore.
- 32 They angered *him* also at the waters of strife,  
So that it went ill with Moses for their sakes:
- 33 Because they provoked his spirit,  
So that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.
- 34 They did not destroy the nations,  
Concerning whom the Lord commanded them:
- 35 But were mingled among the heathen,  
And learned their works.
- 36 And they served their idols:  
Which were a snare unto them.
- 37 Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto  
devils,
- 38 And shed innocent blood,  
*Even* the blood of their sons and of their daughters,

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29. *Their inventions*; rather *deeds*, or *actions*; *i.e.*, their wicked works.

31. *And that was counted unto him for righteousness*. This expression implies here something more than justification, in its primary sense of acquittal from sin, and "peace with God" (as in Rom. iv. 1-5; v. 1), which, it may be presumed, Phinehas had already obtained; but his "zeal for his God" on this occasion was graciously rewarded with the promise of "an everlasting priesthood" in his family—Num. xxv. 13.

32. *The waters of strife*; or *Meribah*.—Num. xx. 13.

34, 35. *But were mingled among, or formed alliances with, the heathen*; contrary to the prohibition—Deut. vii. 2-5. The Psalmist now adverts to the conduct of the Israelites after the death of Joshua, as recorded in Judges ii., and to their consequent afflictions and oppressions, narrated in the subsequent chapters of that book.

37. The word rendered *devils* occurs only here, and in Deut. xxxii. 17, and its precise meaning is uncertain; but it is doubtless employed as a designation of the heathen deities. "However unnatural and horrid human sacrifices may appear, it is certain that they did not only exist, but almost universally prevailed, in the heathen world, especially among the Canaanites and the Phœnicians."—*B.C.B.*

- Whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan :  
And the land was polluted with blood.
- 39 Thus were they defiled with their own works,  
And went a whoring with their own inventions.
- 40 Therefore was the wrath of the LORD  
Kindled against his people ;  
Insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance :
- 41 And he gave them into the hand of the heathen ;  
And they that hated them ruled over them.
- 42 Their enemies also oppressed them,  
And they were brought into subjection under their hand.
- 43 Many times did he deliver them ;  
But they provoked *him* with their counsel,  
And were brought low for their iniquity.
- 44 Nevertheless he regarded their affliction,  
When he heard their cry :
- 45 And he remembered for them his covenant,  
And repented according to the multitude of his mercies.
- 46 He made them also to be pitied  
Of all those that carried them captives.
- 47 Save us, O LORD our God,  
And gather us from among the heathen,  
To give thanks unto thy holy name,  
And to triumph in thy praise.
- 48 Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel  
From everlasting to everlasting.  
And let all the people say, Amen.  
Praise ye the LORD.

PSALM CVII.

Much has been written on this Psalm, in reference both to its occasion and date, and to its literary merits. By the majority of commentators it has

39. *And went a whoring with their own inventions, or works; i.e., committed spiritual whoredom in forsaking God, and worshipping the works of their own hands.*

48. This Psalm concludes the fourth Jewish division of the Psalter, terminating, like the preceding one, with a doxology.



been considered to belong to the period succeeding the return of the Jews from Babylon, and to have especial reference to the deliverance which they had experienced; but some have taken a different view. "It seems more likely," remarks Jebb, "to have been the composition of an earlier age, that of David, and to have a direct reference to the many deliverances of the Israelites from Egypt, and from their several captivities under the judges; and a prospective and prophetic allusion to the restoration, still future, of the chosen people to their own land. It is closely connected with Psalm cxi., and is an expansion of the last clause of that Psalm—

Save us, O Lord our God,  
And gather us from among the heathen,  
That we may give thanks unto the name of thy holiness,  
That we may triumph in thy praise.

It is clear from this prayer having been used by David (1 Chron. xvi. 35), that the allusion to captivity is not a decisive mark of late composition. But, indeed, it forms a magnificent climax to all the providential Psalms which precede; and, in concluding this high argument, exhibits an ode unequalled in the regularity and beauty of its arrangement, and in the heartfelt piety of its eucharistic tone." Several expressions in the course of the Psalm, however, besides the opening verses, may be urged in favour of the later date. Verse 16 is probably a quotation from Isaiah xlv. 2; for, that the prophecy, and not the Psalm, is the original, may be inferred from its constituting an essential and integral portion of the former, whereas in the Psalm, setting aside any direct or special reference, it would merely bear the stamp of poetical imagery. The mention also of *the congregation of the people*, and *the assembly of the elders* (verse 32), seems to accord with the circumstances of the recently returned exiles, assembling for worship before they had rebuilt the temple, and the use of the word rendered *enemy* (verse 2), in that sense, is a further indication of a later age; see on verses 2, 16. By some who assign the Psalm to this period, it is regarded not simply as having certain direct allusions to the deliverance from Babylon, but as a celebration, throughout, of that event, describing the late condition of the exiles by a series of representations, some of which may be literally appropriate, but others only in the way of symbol and comparison. But this seems a strained interpretation to support a hypothesis which has but little solid ground to rest upon; for the opening stanza, which forms the basis of the whole, does not accord in its details with the circumstances, as the Jews were not on this occasion gathered *from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south*; nor, though they might have to pass through a wilderness to their own country, could they be said to have *wandered* there, as described in verses 4, 5; on the contrary, we find their journey was signally prospered by "the hand of their God upon them."—Ezra viii. 21–23, 31, 32. On the whole, perhaps the most correct view is that taken by Phillips, who remarks: "I cannot but think that if the Psalm had been specially intended to commemorate the event referred to, it would have alluded to some of the circumstances which occurred on the occasion (see Ezra viii.), or, at least, it would not have dwelt with so much particularity on certain kinds of suffering and distress, not one of which, do we learn from the history, was experienced by the Jews, in their journey from Babylon to Jerusalem. I am, therefore, of opinion that the contents of the Psalm cannot be made to correspond with any event which we find recorded in the annals of the Jewish

people, and that, in all probability, it was composed for the purpose of being used by persons of all nations and ages, whenever they desire to celebrate the good providence of God, which is often signally manifested when man is placed in the more perilous conditions of life;" thus inculcating and illustrating the duty and benefit of calling upon God in the day of trouble, and praising Him for deliverance from it. Respecting the beauty of the composition there cannot be two opinions, and the Psalm is placed, by universal consent, in the first rank of poetic excellence. "It may undoubtedly," remarks Bishop Lowth, "be enumerated among the most elegant monuments of antiquity." And "had such an idyl," says Dr. A. Clarke, "appeared in Theocritus or Virgil, or had it been found as a scene in any of the Greek tragedians, even in Æschylus himself, it would have been praised up to the heavens, and probably have been produced as their masterpiece." The Psalm consists of five principal divisions, all, except the last, perfectly analogous in their construction. The verb in verse 2, *Let them say*, in connection with the opening verse, may, as suggested by Schnurrer, be understood before each of the three succeeding divisions, viz., at verses 10, 17, 23—*Let them that sit, or sat, in darkness, &c., say, O give thanks unto the Lord, &c.* After a description of a class of calamities, comes the first burden, a cry for deliverance, *Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, with its answer, And he delivered them out of their distresses*; followed by an appropriate couplet descriptive of the deliverance granted. This is succeeded by the second burden, or chorus of thanksgiving, *Let them praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men*, in like manner followed by a couplet beautifully diversified.—See verses 6-9, 13-16, 19-22, 28-31. "In all these passages," remarks Bishop Lowth, "the transition from the contemplation of their calamities to that of their deliverance," and, it may be added, again from the deliverance to the thanksgiving, "which is made by the perpetual repetition of the same distich, is truly elegant." "The latter part of the Psalm" (verses 33-43), continues the same writer, "which comprehends a vast variety of matter, concludes with two distichs, expressive of a sentiment grave, solemn and practical, and in no respect unworthy of the rest of the poem."

- 1 O GIVE thanks unto the LORD, for *he* is good :  
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- 2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say *so*,  
Whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy ;
- 3 And gathered them out of the lands,  
From the east and from the west,  
From the north and from the south.

PSALM cvii. 2. *From the hand of the enemy.* Some render, *from the hand of trouble, or distress*; but the former sense, in which the Hebrew word is used by the later writers only, is more appropriate to the context.

3. *From the south*; Hebrew, *the sea*. This word is frequently used for *the west*, the Mediterranean Sea being the western boundary of Palestine;

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- 4 They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way;  
They found no city to dwell in.
- 5 Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.
- 6 Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble,  
*And he delivered them out of their distresses.*
- 7 And he led them forth by the right way.  
That they might go to a city of habitation.
- 8 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness,  
And *for* his wonderful works to the children of men !
- 9 For he satisfieth the longing soul,  
And filleth the hungry soul with goodness.
- 10 Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,  
*Being bound in affliction and iron ;*
- 11 Because they rebelled against the words of God,  
And contemned the counsel of the Most High :
- 12 Therefore he brought down their heart with labour ;  
They fell down, and *there was none to help.*
- 13 Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble  
*And he saved them out of their distresses.*
- 

but here the connection requires it to be understood of *the south*, in allusion, it is supposed, to the Red Sea, which lies in that direction. An addition of two letters to the Hebrew would make the word *south*, which some adopt as the original reading, but it is not supported by any MSS., nor by the old versions, which render literally, *the sea*.

8. The use of the word *men* in this and the corresponding verses, for which there is nothing in the Hebrew, has the effect of generalizing the sentiment, instead of individualizing it, and bringing it home, in each case, to the persons who have experienced the deliverance. Translators generally render, more literally and correctly, *Let them praise, &c.*; Luther, "These should praise, &c."

10. *Such as sit*; rather, *sat*. The Hebrew is in the participial form, which may denote either present or past time. The context here requires the latter, the deliverance being represented as already accomplished. *The shadow of death*; see on Psalms xxiii. 4; xlv. 19. *Being bound in affliction and iron*; i.e., *afflicting iron*, or *fetters*; an example of what grammarians term, hendiadys; two nouns being joined by the copula to express a single idea, the one qualifying the other as an adjective.

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- 14 He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death,  
And brake their bands in sunder.
- 15 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness,  
And *for* his wonderful works to the children of men !
- 16 For he hath broken the gates of brass,  
And cut the bars of iron in sunder.
- 17 Fools because of their transgression,  
And because of their iniquities, are afflicted.
- 18 Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat ;  
And they draw near unto the gates of death.
- 19 Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble,  
And he saveth them out of their distresses.
- 20 He sent his word, and healed them,  
And delivered *them* from their destructions.
- 21 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness,  
And *for* his wonderful works to the children of men !
- 

16. If the Psalm has a direct reference to the restoration from the captivity, the allusion of the prophet Isaiah (xlv. 2), and that of the Psalmist, are identical, viz., to the brazen gates of Babylon, opened in the former case to admit the conqueror, in the latter, to release the exiles ; and the whole of this division is certainly very appropriate, both in respect to their condition as captives, and to the cause of their affliction.

17. This verse appears defective, not presenting, like the rest, a regular couplet of two distinct lines. The old translators either read or understood the first word differently, as all, except the Chaldee, render :—

He helped them out of the way of their transgression,  
For they were brought low because of their iniquities.

The parallel seems to require a verb in that position, and Houbigant's rendering, *contabuerant* (by a change of one letter), if it were better supported than it appears to be on critical grounds, would be quite satisfactory, making the couplet stand thus :—

They who languished because of their transgression,  
And were afflicted for their iniquities.

The verbs in the next two verses would be better rendered in the past tense.

20. *Their destructions* ; literally *pits*, or *graves*, equivalent to *the gates of death*, in verse 18.

- 22 And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving,  
And declare his works with rejoicing.
- 23 They that go down to the sea in ships,  
That do business in great waters ;
- 24 These see the works of the LORD,  
And his wonders in the deep.
- 25 For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind,  
Which lifteth up the waves thereof.
- 26 They mount up to the heaven,  
They go down again to the depths :  
Their soul is melted because of trouble.
- 27 They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man,  
And are at their wit's end.
- 28 Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble,  
And he bringeth them out of their distresses.
- 29 He maketh the storm a calm,  
So that the waves thereof are still.
- 30 Then are they glad because they be quiet ;  
So he bringeth them unto their desired haven.
- 31 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness,  
And *for* his wonderful works to the children of men !
- 32 Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people,  
And praise him in the assembly of the elders.
- 33 He turneth rivers into a wilderness,  
And the watersprings into dry ground ;

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26. *Their soul is melted, &c.* "This is no less expressive than descriptive. When the sea literally runs mountains high, and when the vessel is raised to the clouds on the ridge of a stupendous wave, and then precipitated into the yawning gulf below, the very soul seems to dissolve, and the whole mind to melt away, so that neither feeling nor reflection remains, but the mere apprehension of inevitable destruction."—*B.C.B.*

33. This verse commences the fifth division, which is of a more general and diversified character than either of the preceding, exemplifying the power and providence of God, in the evils He inflicts, and the blessings He confers, on a land (verses 33-35), and its inhabitants (verses 36-39), and in the humiliation of the mighty, and the exaltation of the lowly (verses 40, 41), with two concluding verses analogous to those of the former parts.

- 34 A fruitful land into barrenness,  
For the wickedness of them that dwell therein.
- 35 He turneth the wilderness into a standing water,  
And dry ground into watersprings.
- 36 And there he maketh the hungry to dwell,  
That they may prepare a city for habitation ;
- 37 And sow the fields, and plant vineyards,  
Which may yield fruits of increase.
- 38 He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly;  
And suffereth not their cattle to decrease.
- 39 Again, they are minished and brought low,  
Through oppression, affliction, and sorrow.
- 40 He poureth contempt upon princes,  
And causeth them to wander in the wilderness, *where there*  
*is no way.*
- 41 Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction,  
And maketh *him* families like a flock.
- 42 The righteous shall see it, and rejoice:  
And all iniquity shall stop her mouth.
- 43 Whoso is wise, and will observe these *things*,  
Even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord.

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"The changes here mentioned in the physical condition of districts and countries, are the frequent effects of earthquakes."—*Phillips*.

34. *A fruitful land into barrenness*; literally, *saltiness*. Salt, in large quantities, destroys vegetation, and is frequently mentioned by ancient writers as a mark of barrenness. "Hence the sowing of a place with salt (as in Judges ix. 45) was a custom in different nations to express permanent desolation."—*B.C.B.* The Psalmist is supposed to allude to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, to which Moses compares the plagues which the Lord would, for the sins of Israel, "lay upon their land ;" that, "it is brimstone and salt and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim."—*Dent. xxix. 23.* The Targum thus paraphrases this verse : "The land of Israel, which bore fruit, He hath laid waste as Sodom, which was overturned on account of the wickedness of its inhabitants." Some of these verses are not inappropriate to the condition of Judea, brought to comparative desolation by the captivity of her people, and again restored to prosperity by their deliverance.

## - PSALM CVIII.

A Song or Psalm of David.

This Psalm is composed of two Psalms; verses 1-5 being the same as Psalm lvii. 7-11, and verses 6-13 the same as Psalm lx. 5-12. Respecting the occasion on which the greater part of it was composed, see title of Psalm lx., and remarks there. The alteration in the opening verses appears to have been designed to give it a more cheerful and entirely triumphant tone, either in reference to the same events, at a somewhat later stage, or in adaptation to another occasion.

- 1 O GOD, my heart is fixed ;  
I will sing and give praise,  
Even with my glory.
- 2 Awake, psaltery and harp :  
I *myself* will awake early.
- 3 I will praise thee, O LORD, among the people :  
And I will sing praises unto thee among the nations.
- 4 For thy mercy is great above the heavens :  
And thy truth *reacheth* unto the clouds.
- 5 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens :  
And thy glory above all the earth.
- 6 That thy beloved may be delivered :  
Save *with* thy right hand, and answer me.
- 7 God hath spoken in his holiness ; I will rejoice,  
I will divide Shechem,  
And mete out the valley of Succoth.
- 8 Gilead is mine ; Manasseh is mine ;  
Ephraim also is the strength of mine head ;  
Judah is my lawgiver ;

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PSALM cviii. 1, 2. See on Psalm lvii. 7, 8. *Even with my glory.* With is not in the Hebrew : *Even my inmost soul (shall praise thee).*—See on Psalm xvi. 9.

4. *Above the heavens, and thy truth reacheth unto the clouds ;* or, as in Psalm lvii. 11, *Unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds.* "Both readings convey the same sense, viz., that the mercy of God extendeth even to heaven, i.e., is very great."—*Phillips.* In the second clause of this verse, and also of verses 3 and 5, the only variation in the original is the insertion of the conjunction *and*. For notes on the rest of this Psalm, see on corresponding verses of Psalm lx.

- 9 Moab is my washpot ;  
Over Edom will I cast out my shoe ;  
Over Philistia will I triumph.
- 10 Who will bring me into the strong city ?  
Who will lead me into Edom ?
- 11 *Wilt not thou, O God, who hast cast us off ?*  
And wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts ?
- 12 Give us help from trouble :  
For vain is the help of man.
- 13 Through God we shall do valiantly :  
For he *it is that* shall tread down our enemies.

PSALM CIX.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

Bishop Horne and others, adopting the interpretation given to this Psalm by the early Christian fathers, regard it as altogether a prediction of the Divine judgments, to be inflicted, first upon Judas, to whom verse 8 is applied by the apostle Peter (Acts i. 16-20), and afterwards on the Jewish nation, for their disobedience and rejection of the Messiah. In support of this view, it is alleged that the imprecations are at variance with the character and conduct of David towards his enemies, as exhibited in the historical books, whether suffering from the persecution of Saul, or from the rebellious conduct of his undutiful but still dearly beloved son. But this mode of expounding the Psalm, according to which the Messiah must be regarded as the speaker, appears rather to increase the difficulty than tend to remove it; for, if the spirit which it breathes is incompatible with the personal character of the king of Israel, how much more with that of the Saviour of men ? If the series of imprecations, winding up with the words of verse 20, *Let this be the reward of mine adversaries from the Lord, and of them that speak evil against my soul*, be incongruous from the mouth of David, how much more from the lips of Him, whose reproofs of the wicked, however uncompromising and severe, were ever characterized by the absence of all vindictive feeling; who wept when He foresaw and foretold the approaching desolation of Jerusalem; and when stretched upon the cross uttered the prayer for His murderers, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do?" Though the sacred narrative represents David as a man of a forgiving temper and magnanimous spirit, "it also represents him," remarks Hengstenberg, "as a person possessed of energetic faith in the avenging justice of God, and of lively desires for its execution; his magnanimity is so far from standing in opposition to this, that it is in this faith it has its root;" and if we consider the Psalmist as declaring, in the character of a righteous sufferer, the judgments of God against ungodly and impenitent persecutors, rather than expressing his personal feelings, the objection loses its force, whether the words be uttered by David or by Christ. Whoever may have been the primary object of the denunciations, they are equally applicable to men of like character in after times, more especially, as a nation, to those who



consummated their impiety by rejecting and crucifying the Lord of Glory; and no doubt other passages, besides that quoted by the apostle, may very aptly describe the miseries which fell upon the Jewish people.—See on verses 8, 10, 11, 14, 18. The literary character of the Psalm is thus portrayed by Amyrald: "I make bold to affirm that the poet here exerted himself to the uttermost to compose a poem which should be the most eloquent of its kind. For he varies these, his imprecations, to such an extent; some of them he sets forth under such a variety of forms, and with such different degrees of intensity; others he exhibits at such length and with such accuracy; he runs with care through all the topics which could furnish him with anything bearing upon his purpose; finally, he considers, in such a variety of ways, the curse of God, lest there should be, as it were, any form of it which he does not imprecate upon his abandoned foe, that I have no doubt whatever he took particular pains to render his poem, in this respect, altogether perfect."

- 1 HOLD not thy peace, O God of my praise;
- 2 For the mouth of the wicked  
And the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me :  
They have spoken against me with a lying tongue.
- 3 They compassed me about also with words of hatred ;  
And fought against me without a cause.
- 4 For my love they are my adversaries :  
But I give myself unto prayer.
- 5 And they have rewarded me evil for good,  
And hatred for my love.
- 6 Set thou a wicked man over him ;  
And let Satan stand at his right hand.

PSALM cix. 1. This verse admits of a double signification, either as rendered by the Septuagint and Vulgate, "O God, be not silent of my praise;" keep not silent from praising me, while I suffer the reproaches of men; or, *Keep not silence*, i.e., disregard me not (as Psalms xxviii. 1, xxxv. 22), *O God, the object of my praise*. The latter seems the true sense, in accordance with the resolution expressed in verse 30, and with the phraseology of Deut. x. 21, "He is thy praise," &c., and Jer. xvii. 14, "Thou art my praise."—See also Psalms xxii. 26, lxxi. 6.

6. "Dr. Sykes, Michaëlis, and others, contend that these imprecations are those of David's enemies against himself; and they would render: *Set, say they, a wicked, &c.*" (B.C.B.); but this hypothesis is not only inconsistent with the use made of verse 8 by the apostle, but also with any fair construction of verse 20, and with the general purport of the Psalm, and others of like import. *Set thou a wicked man over him*; "as his superior, and

- 7 When he shall be judged, let him be condemned:  
And let his prayer become sin.
- 8 Let his days be few ;  
And let another take his office.
- 9 Let his children be fatherless,  
And his wife a widow.
- 10 Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg :  
Let them seek *their bread* also out of their desolate places.
- 11 Let the extortioner catch all that he hath ;  
And let the strangers spoil his labour.

judicial authority, for the righteous punishment of the shameful abuse of his judicial powers."—*Hengstenberg*. And let *Satan*, more correctly, *his adversary*, stand at his right hand; as an accuser, or one prepared to frustrate his purposes.

7. *When he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin.* The latter clause, taken in connection with the preceding, may simply mean,—Let his entreaty for mercy to his judge aggravate his condemnation, as Haman's only exasperated the king (Esther vii. 7, 8); but the sentiment, in a higher sense, is in accordance with other passages of Scripture, where the prayer or sacrifices of the wicked are declared to be an abomination to the Lord.—See Prov. xv. 8, xxi. 27, xxviii. 9; Isa. i. 13–15. "I cannot," says Corderius, "conceive that a greater curse can fall upon a man, than that his vows, sacrifices, and prayers, should be so performed as not to be distinguishable from his crimes. Is it not the extreme of misery to have the fountains of salvation so tainted, that where thou hadst hoped for life, thou shouldst incur death? Surely God never shows Himself more severe against sinners, than when He suffers them to arrive at such a state that the very means of grace become the stumbling-blocks to their ruin."—*Translated from Phillips's Note*.

8. *Let his days be few.* "An untimely death is often mentioned in the Old Testament as a punishment on men who are eminently guilty.—See Psalm lv. 23; Prov. x. 27."—*Phillips*. Judas, to whom the apostle applies this verse, died by his own hand. And let another take his office; the Septuagint, as quoted in Acts i. 20, his *bishoprick*, which accurately represents the Hebrew word, denoting in its primary sense, simply *charge*, *office*, or *oversership*. The *days* of the Jews, as a nation, after their rejection of Christ, were *few*, and the Gentiles succeeded to their office as the Church of God.

10. There may be an allusion to the latter words of this verse in those employed by our Lord in foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate;" and since that event the Jews have been as vagabonds over all the earth.

11. *Let the extortioner catch, rather let the creditor seize, all that he hath,*

- 29 Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame,  
And let them cover themselves with their own confusion, as  
with a mantle.
- 30 I will greatly praise the LORD with my mouth;  
Yea, I will praise him among the multitude.
- 31 For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor,  
To save *him* from those that condemn his soul.

## PSALM CX.

## A Psalm of David.

Some commentators, rendering the title, *A Psalm concerning David*, suppose it to have been written by one of his subjects, after he had taken the stronghold of Zion from the Jebusites (2 Sam. v. 6–10), and established his throne in Jerusalem, formerly the seat of Melchizedek; and interpret verse 1 as a promise of Divine aid to his armies, while he himself remained there, without endangering his person in battle, agreeably to the wish expressed by his people (2 Sam. xxi. 17): but, although the relations of David's reign may have formed the groundwork of the phraseology, such a mode of exposition evidently falls far short of the importance and solemnity of the terms employed; and the opinion of the ancient Jewish Church that David was the *author* and not the *subject* of the Psalm, and that he spake of One greater than himself, is confirmed by the authority of Christ Himself, who, in quoting the words of verse 1, assumes the authorship of David and the Messianic characters of the Psalm as acknowledged facts, and makes them the basis of His train of reasoning.—See Matt. xxii. 42–46. The personage whom David calls his *Lord* is represented as invested with Divine power and dignity, both as “a king to reign, and a priest to offer the sacrificial propitiation” (*J. P. Smith*),—two offices which were never combined in David or any of his successors on the Israelitish throne—going forth from Zion, attended by a host of willing followers, to achieve the spiritual conquest of the world; employing irresistible powers in subduing His enemies, and overcoming all obstacles to the establishment of His kingdom of truth and righteousness. “Luther calls this Psalm ‘the true, high, main Psalm of our beloved Lord, Jesus Christ;’ our Lord Himself attests that it was composed in the Holy Ghost; and there is no other passage of the Old Testament so frequently quoted or echoed in the New.”—*Hengstenberg*.

- 1 THE LORD said unto my Lord,  
Sit thou at my right hand,  
Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

PSALM cx. 1. This verse furnishes another instance, as remarked on Psalm viii. 1, of the disadvantage of rendering *Jehovah* by *Lord*:—*Jehovah said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand*. The right hand was accounted the post of honour, and the person seated at the right hand of a monarch was often one partaking of the regal power and dignity. Thus Bathsheba, as the king's mother, was seated on the right hand of Solomon.—1 Kings ii. 19.

- 2 The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion :  
Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.
- 3 Thy people *shall be willing* in the day of thy power,  
In the beauties of holiness  
From the womb of the morning :  
Thou hast the dew of thy youth.

2. *The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion.* "It was at Zion that the Gospel was first preached, and it may therefore be said that from thence Christ's authority was first proclaimed. *Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.* This has been literally the case in all ages of the Church. It has existed at all times in the midst of its enemies; it so exists at the present day; even in countries where Christianity is professed as the religion of the people, the Church is surrounded by its adversaries, who are not only without, but also within its pale. Human wickedness in every form, and human passions of every kind, have united against the Church; yet, in the midst of this opposition, it has been preserved, exhibiting at some periods, it is true, less life and vigour than at others; still it has survived the combination of powers to destroy it, thus affording us an assurance that it will go on overcoming all resistance, and that its Head will eventually put all enemies under His feet."—*Phillips.*

3. Our translators have given a correct literal version, but some of the expressions in this verse admit of a little diversity of exposition, and the sense of the latter part is injured by the punctuation: the colon, or principal stop, should be *before* instead of *after* the words, *from the womb of the morning*, which are closely connected with the succeeding clause. *Thy people shall be willing.* This may import either free-will offerings on the part of the people, or a willing surrender of themselves. The latter seems the more appropriate to the context, but both ideas may be comprehended. *In the day of thy power.* The Hebrew word also signifies *forces*, or *armies*: *in the day of thy warfare*, or, *leading forth thy hosts.* *In the beauties of holiness.* Some MSS. read, *On thy holy mountains*; but the authorities greatly preponderate in favour of the received and more appropriate reading. In accordance with the sacerdotal character of their leader, and the spiritual nature of the warfare, His followers are represented as arrayed in the holy attire of priests.—See on Psalm xxix. 2. *From the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth.* The last word may denote either the state or season of youth, or young persons, progeny. In the former sense, the clause may import: Thou art endued with perpetual vigour, fresh as the morning dew; in the latter, which is the more appropriate: Thy host, or progeny, in all the vigour of youth, is numerous and resplendent as the dew-drops of the morning, or, as the particle may be rendered, *is more than, or beyond, i.e., more numerous than, the drops of morning dew.*

- 4 The LORD hath sworn and will not repent,  
 Thou art a priest for ever  
 After the order of Melchizedek.
- 5 The LORD at thy right hand  
 Shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.
- 6 He shall judge among the heathen,  
 He shall fill *the places* with the dead bodies;  
 He shall wound the heads over many countries.
- 7 He shall drink of the brook in the way;  
 Therefore shall he lift up the head.

4. Melchizedek, whose name signifies *King of righteousness*, and who is abruptly introduced in the Scripture history (Gen. xiv. 18) as "king of Salem and priest of the Most High God," is here adduced by the Psalmist as a type of the regal and sacerdotal character of the Messiah, a topic copiously treated on and illustrated in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chapters v. and vii.

5. *The Lord at thy right hand, &c.* In the preceding verses the Messiah is addressed in the second person; here either the address changes to Jehovah, and the Messiah is designated as *the Lord*, or, which seems preferable, there is a change of position, *the Lord* being at the right hand of the Messiah, instead of the reverse, as at verse 1. "Assuredly because the King sits at the right hand of Jehovah, that is, because all power has been given unto Him in heaven and in earth, Jehovah is at the right hand of the King; stands by Him, with His omnipotence, in the conflict against His enemies; or because the King is connected with the right hand of Omnipotence, His right hand must be strengthened by omnipotence."—*Hengstenberg*. In this and the two concluding verses (where Messiah is spoken of in the third person), He is represented "under the figure of a warrior, conquering the nations of the earth, and bringing them into subjection to Himself" (*Phillips*), in language very similar to that of Psalm ii. and Rev. xix. 11–18.

6. *He shall wound the heads over many countries; i.e.,* the rulers of the earth; or the expression may be taken more literally, as in Psalm lxxviii. 21, "God shall wound the head of his enemies."

7. "The figure of *the brook* out of which the King shall drink in the way, in the course of the contest and the victory, is explained by the history of Samson—Judg. xv. 18, 19. Our Samson, the beloved Warrior, is not like this type, subject to fatigue, as sure as He sits at the right hand of Omnipotence; but people drink from the fountain not only to quench thirst, but also to remain exempt from thirst; and the service rendered by such a brook is performed for Him by that Divine strength always flowing into Him, which

PSALM CXI.

The structure of this and the following Psalm is very regular, each consisting, exclusive of the Hallelujah, which may be considered the title, of twenty-two lines, which commence with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet in consecutive order, and are combined in the first eight verses in couplets, and in the last two in triplets, thus making the perfect number of ten verses. The arrangement of lines, thus clearly indicated by the initial letter, marks strongly the theory of parallelism as a principle of Hebrew poetry. "The Psalmist here praises the Lord for His great works, which He has done for His people, and which exhibit His honour, majesty, and righteousness." —*Phillips*. Verses 5 and 6 appear to allude to the sustenance of the Israelites in the wilderness, and giving them possession of Canaan; and verse 9 to the deliverance from Egypt, or, if the Psalm was composed after that event, to their release from the captivity in Babylon.

- 1 PRAISE ye the LORD.  
I will praise the LORD with *my* whole heart,  
In the assembly of the upright, and *in* the congregation.
- 2 The works of the LORD *are* great,  
Sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.
- 3 His work *is* honourable and glorious :  
And his righteousness endureth for ever.
- 4 He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered :  
The LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion.

secures Him against fatigue in the hottest conflicts. His servants, however, and warriors are often fatigued in the way, and cry out with Samson of old, 'I shall now die with thirst, and fall into the hand of these uncircumcised.' But the same fountain which secures the Captain against fatigue, strengthens His soldiers in their endurance of it, and supports them, so that they can lift up their head along with their Captain. The concluding clause, *Therefore shall he lift up the head*, corresponds to that at the commencement, *Sit thou at my right hand*. Such a beginning can be followed only by such an end. The warrior lifts up his head in triumph after all his enemies have been cast down to the ground; and his soldiers shout victory, and proclaim him to be a hero who keeps field and heart. This shall happen in the most glorious manner when the blessed and joyful day shall dawn on which it shall be proclaimed, 'The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever.'—Rev. xi. 15.—*Hengstenberg*.

PSALM cxi. 2. *Sought out*; i.e., a theme for investigation and devout contemplation, *by all them that have pleasure therein*; or, as it may, perhaps more correctly, be rendered: *Sought out according to all their desires*; i.e., to the utmost delight and satisfaction of the pious mind.

- 5 He hath given meat unto them that fear him :  
He will ever be mindful of his covenant.
- 6 He hath shewed his people the power of his works,  
That he may give them the heritage of the heathen.
- 7 The works of his hands *are* verity and judgment ;  
All his commandments *are* sure :
- 8 They stand fast for ever and ever,  
*And are* done in truth and uprightness.
- 9 He sent redemption unto his people :  
He hath commanded his covenant for ever :  
Holy and reverend is his name.
- 10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom :  
A good understanding have all they that do his command-  
ments.  
His praise endureth for ever.

## PSALM CXII.

This Psalm is an amplification of the last verse of the preceding, showing the *blessedness*, the *good understanding*, and the *good success* of the man

7. *All his commandments are sure, or faithful.* "God's commandments are certain of being performed. Whatsoever threats or promises He makes, they are sure to be executed."—*Phillips*.

8. In this verse the first line points to the *commandments*, and the second to the *works*, mentioned in the preceding verse : the *commandments stand fast*, the *works are done*, &c.

9. *He hath commanded his covenant for ever ; i.e.,* commanded it to endure, or ordained it for ever. *Holy and reverend is his name.* It is rather remarkable that Christian ministers have so generally assumed, as a title, an epithet which, in the only passage of Scripture where it occurs, is applied to the Deity Himself.

10. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning, or foundation, of wisdom ; or, as the word also signifies, the chief or principal part.* They who evince this fear by *doing his commandments*, give practical evidence of their wisdom, or *good understanding* ; or the latter clause may be rendered as in the margin, — *Good success, or prosperity, have all they that do his commandments.* The last word is not in the Hebrew, but is supplied by the sense and a reference to verse 7. *His praise endureth for ever.* Some understand, the praise of every one who fears God, and keeps His commandments ; but the praise of God seems to accord better with the grammatical construction, and forms a conclusion more appropriate to the opening of the Psalm and to its general tenor.

that feareth the Lord, and delighteth in His commandments. "It was probably composed for the use of the Jews after their return from the Babylonish captivity."—*B.C.B.*

1 PRAISE ye the LORD.

Blessed is the man *that* feareth the LORD,  
That delighteth greatly in his commandments.

2 His seed shall be mighty upon earth :  
The generation of the upright shall be blessed.

3 Wealth and riches *shall be* in his house :  
And his righteousness endureth for ever.

4 Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness :  
*He is* gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.

5 A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth :  
He will guide his affairs with discretion.

6 Surely he shall not be moved for ever :  
The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.

7 He shall not be afraid of evil tidings :  
His heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD.

8 His heart is established, he shall not be afraid,  
Until he see *his desire* upon his enemies.

9 He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor ;

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PSALM cxii. 3, 4. *His righteousness endureth for ever. He is gracious and full of compassion.* These expressions employed in verses 3, 4 of the preceding Psalm, in reference to God, are here applied to the man who fears Him. "Because a God-fearing heart knows well that all good from above flows from the compassion of God, so meditating upon the compassion of God, makes it also compassionate. For that is the true fear of God, which endeavours more and more to imitate God, and to become like Him in His Divine perfections."

4. *Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness.* "An allusion to what happened in Egypt, when the Israelites had light in all their dwellings, while the land was wrapt in darkness."—*Horsley.*

5. *He will guide his affairs with discretion ;* or, "He will sustain his affairs in judgment, so that he cannot be convicted of any iniquity or wickedness."—*Phillips.*

7. *He shall not be afraid of evil tidings ;* whether reports of danger, or slanders upon his character.

8. *Until, or whilst, he seeth, his desire upon his enemies.* The Hebrew is simply, *Whilst he looketh* (Vulgate, "looketh down") *upon his enemies.*—See on Psalm liv. 7.



- His righteousness endureth for ever ;  
 His horn shall be exalted with honour.
- 10 The wicked shall see *it*, and be grieved ;  
 He shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away :  
 The desire of the wicked shall perish.

## PSALM CXIII.

"This and the following five Psalms, form, what is called by the Hebrews, the great *Hallel* or *Praise* ; which was sung on their most solemn festivals, and particularly after the celebration of the Passover.—See Matt. xxvi. 30, Mark xiv. 26. This and the following Psalm were probably composed after the return from the captivity."—*B.C.B.* This Psalm is a song of praise to God, for His greatness and excellency, and for His condescension in regarding the affairs of men ; more especially for His goodness to the poor and destitute.

- 1 PRAISE ye the LORD.  
 Praise, O ye servants of the LORD,  
 Praise the name of the LORD.
- 2 Blessed be the name of the LORD  
 From this time forth and for evermore.
- 3 From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same  
 The LORD's name is to be praised.
- 4 The LORD is high above all nations,  
 And his glory above the heavens.

PSALM cxiii. 1-3. The *name* of God is often used in Scripture as an emphatic or poetic expression for God Himself (see Psalms xxx. 1, lii. 9, lxxv. 1 ; Prov. xviii. 10), sometimes in the sense of authority, at others, in that of fame or renown, or with historical reference, as in the present instance. "*The name of the Lord*, is the Lord according to His historical character. The people of God have the privilege of having a God, whose name is the product of His deeds. The world, which forms a God according to its own fancies, has a nameless God. The removal of every limit of time in reference to the praise of the Lord in verse 2, proceeds on the supposition that the Lord continues for ever to reveal His glorious nature—gives throughout eternity always new occasion to praise Him."—*Hengstenberg*.

3. *The Lord's name is to be praised* ; rather, *Praised be the name of the Lord* ; the verb being supplied from the first line of verse 2, with which the present is exactly parallel, the two verses forming a beautiful *epanodes* :—

- Blessed be the name of the Lord  
 From this time forth and for evermore ;  
 From the rising of the sun to the going down thereof,  
 Praised be the name of the Lord.

- 5 Who is like unto the LORD our God,  
Who dwelleth on high,  
6 Who humbleth *himself* to behold  
*The things that are* in heaven, and in the earth !  
7 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust,  
And lifteth the needy out of the dunghill ;  
8 That he may set *him* with princes,  
Even with the princes of his people.  
9 He maketh the barren woman to keep house,  
And to be a joyful mother of children.  
Praise ye the LORD.

5, 6. The words supplied by our translators in the latter clause are unnecessary. The two verses may be rendered :—

Who is like unto the Lord our God ?  
Who dwelleth on high ; (literally, exalteth himself to dwell ;)  
Who looketh down, (literally, stoopeth, or humbleth himself, to look,)  
In heaven and in earth.

Or, as Horsley concisely and tersely renders—

“ Who dwelleth high, Who looketh low,  
In heaven, and in earth.

*i.e.*, who dwelleth high in heaven, and looketh low upon earth.”

7, 8. These verses are taken, with little variation, from Hannah's song of thanksgiving on the birth of Samuel (1 Sam. ii. 8), and the Psalmist, no doubt, alludes to that event in verse 9, the more correct rendering of which is, *He maketh the barren woman of the house to dwell, or abide, as a joyful mother of children ; i.e.*, gladdens with offspring the hitherto barren wife. Roberts, speaking of the Hindoos, says, “ Should a married woman, who has long been considered sterile, become a mother, her joy, and that of her husband and friends, is most extravagant. ‘ They called her Malady, *i.e.*, barren, but she has given us some good fruit.’ A man who manifests great delight, is said to be like the barren woman who has borne a child. Of anything exceedingly valuable, it is said, ‘ This is as precious as the son of the barren woman.’ ”—*Oriental Illustrations*. “ The present passage,” remarks Dr. Kitto, “ probably means no more than that the woman thus blessed becomes the maternal head of a family. However, the literal meaning, as given in our version, is susceptible of illustration from the usages of the harems, or female establishments of the East. The virgins, and those who have borne no children, live together in community ; but when one bears a son, she becomes entitled to a distinct establishment for herself, with suitable appointments and attendance.

## PSALM CXIV.

This Psalm, short as it is, is complete in itself, and not more remarkable for the beauty of its language, than for the regularity of its poetic structure, consisting of four distinct strophes or stanzas, each containing two verses or couplets, in which are celebrated the wonders of Omnipotence on the Exodus of the people of Israel from the land of Egypt.

- 1 WHEN Israel went out of Egypt,  
The house of Jacob from a people of strange language;  
2 Judah was his sanctuary,  
And Israel his dominion.

In the East it is always a joyful thing to be the mother of children, and in establishments of this nature, the distinction of being allowed to keep house does, of course, give added intensity to the joys of motherhood."—*Illustrated Commentary*.

PSALM cxiv. 1. *A people of strange language.* The old versions render, a barbarous people. The Greeks applied this epithet to all foreign nations, and it is so employed by the Jewish Rabbinical writers. The language of the Egyptians was strange to the Israelites, not only as a foreign tongue, but also as that of cruelty and oppression.

2. *Judah was his sanctuary.* Commentators remark that *Judah* here represents the whole people, as *Joseph* in Psalm lxxxi. 5, equivalent to *Israel* in the next line; but if the Psalmist wrote subsequently to the division into the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, he might employ the two names familiar in his own times to designate the whole nation, though referring to an antecedent period. *His sanctuary, and his dominion*; the seat of the worship of their God, and the territory of their King, who had "chosen them to be a special people unto himself, above all the people upon the face of the earth"; "a kingdom of priests, an holy nation."—Ex. xix. 5, 6; Deut. vii. 6. The pronouns (*his*) must be understood to refer to God, though not previously mentioned. "He who is always present to the mind of the godly, does not require on every occasion to be expressly named. The questions in verses 5 and 6 would have been anticipated and their appropriateness destroyed, had the Lord been previously mentioned by name as the cause of these great deeds."—*Hengstenberg*. It is thought by some that the *Hallelujah, Praise ye the Lord*, should be placed, as it is in several of the old versions, at the commencement of this Psalm, instead of at the end of the preceding, and that the antecedent would thus be furnished; but this appears to be independent of the subject matter of the Psalms to which it is prefixed, forming no part of the alphabetical arrangement of Psalms cxi. and cxii., and may not improbably have been added by the compiler; and it forms a very appropriate conclusion to Psalm cxiii.

- 3 The sea saw *it*, and fled :  
Jordan was driven back.
- 4 The mountains skipped like rams,  
And the little hills like lambs.
- 5 What *ailed* thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest ?  
Thou Jordan, *that* thou wast driven back ?
- 6 Ye mountains, *that* ye skipped like rams :  
And ye little hills, like lambs ?
- 7 Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord,  
At the presence of the God of Jacob ;
- 8 Which turned the rock *into* a standing water,  
The flint into a fountain of waters.

PSALM CXV.

In most of the old versions and some Hebrew MSS. this Psalm is written a continuation of the preceding, but the difference in style and matter early marks it as a distinct composition. It is probably a thanksgiving for some national triumph or deliverance, and has been referred by different positors to various occasions ; as David's taking the stronghold of Zion from the Jebusites, whose idols are supposed to be designated "the lame and the blind" (2 Sam. v. 6-8) ; the destruction of the army of Sennacherib ; deliverance of the Jews from the machinations of Haman, &c. The Psalmist after calling upon the Lord to vindicate the honour of His name, trusts the God of Israel with the idols of the heathen, and exhorts Israel to trust in his God, who will bless His people, and not suffer them to be rooted out of the earth, and Himself deprived of praise. There is a responsiveallelism between verses 9-11 and 12-15. "In the former, the Psalmist

*The sea saw it* ; Boothroyd, *Him*. The Lord present with His people express the idea intended ; but the text is more striking and emphatic, the original, simply, *The sea saw, or beheld, and fled* ; leaving the *what* supplied by the mind of the reader.

6. These verses seem to allude to Ex. xix. 16-18 ; xx. 18 : "The mount quaked greatly."

"Addison properly observes (*Spectator*, 461), that the author of this designedly works for effect, in pointing out these miraculous effects, without mentioning an agent ; till, at last, when the sea is seen rapidly *receding* from the shore, Jordan retreating to its source, and the mountains *rolling* away like a flock of affrighted sheep, that the passage of Israelites might be uninterrupted—then the cause of all is suddenly indicated, and the presence of God in His grandeur solves every difficulty."

exhorts *Israel, the house of Aaron*, and those that fear the Lord, to trust in Him, and in the latter it is stated that the Lord hath been mindful of these several parties, and will bless them; a poetical arrangement, showing, in all probability, that the former verses were intended to be sung in the temple by one part of the choir, and the latter by another."—*Phillips*.

- 1 NOT unto us, O LORD, not unto us,  
But unto thy name give glory,  
For thy mercy, *and* for thy truth's sake.
- 2 Wherefore should the heathen say,  
Where is now their God?
- 3 But our God is in the heavens:  
He hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.
- 4 Their idols *are* silver and gold,  
The work of men's hands.
- 5 They have mouths, but they speak not:  
Eyes have they, but they see not:
- 6 They have ears, but they hear not:  
Noses have they, but they smell not:
- 7 They have hands, but they handle not:  
Feet have they, but they walk not:  
Neither speak they through their throat.

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PSALM CXV. 4-7. The basis of the description in these verses is Dent. iv. 28: "gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell." "Our passage is the *locus classicus* in the Psalms on the subject of idols, corresponding to the one in the Prophets, Isa. xlv. 9-20. It has been maintained that the place which the Psalmist assigns to the idol-worship, is a false one, in considering the idols of the heathen as their gods, whereas they were only the symbols of them. But the Psalmist has to do, not with the view which the heathen took of their gods, but with the thing itself; and, in reality, apart from the vain imaginations of their worshippers, they had no existence beyond that of the images: compare Psalm xvi. 5. Further it has been maintained that the whole description is feeble by its oneness of tone. It is only so, however, so far as we do not vividly transfer ourselves into the age in which the Psalms were composed, when, with the exception of one small corner, the whole world did homage to these miserable gods, and what now appears trivial and self-evident, went in the face of the consent of the whole human race. On verses 5, 6, compare the opposite description of Jehovah, in Psalm xciv. 9."—*Hengstenberg*.

7. *Neither speak they through their throat.* This scarcely varies in sense

- 8 They that make them are like unto them ;  
So is every one that trusteth in them.
- 9 O Israel, trust thou in the LORD :  
He is their help and their shield.
- 10 O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD :  
He is their help and their shield.
- 11 Ye that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD :  
He is their help and their shield.
- 12 The LORD hath been mindful of us :  
He will bless us ;  
He will bless the house of Israel ;  
He will bless the house of Aaron.
- 13 He will bless them that fear the LORD,  
Both small and great.
- 14 The LORD shall increase you more and more,  
You and your children.

the first line of verse 5. Horsley renders : "They cannot (so much as) breathe in the throat." The Hebrew verb admits of several meanings, and here signify to *murmur*, or emit an inarticulate sound, as a beast, the least degree of animal sound ; or, as some understand it, to *breathe*, which, the proper action of the throat, appears the preferable rendering ; but the sense of the word is not so well ascertained, though it is assigned to the same root in Psalm cxxxv. 17, where see note.

1. The verbs in these three verses may be rendered, as by the old translators, in the indicative—*Israel trusteth in the Lord*, &c., with which the preceding line, *He is their help and their shield*, would agree in person : the hortative form, however, seems preferable ; and the change of person may be accounted for on the supposition of its being a response to be uttered by their part of the choir, or designed to express a more general sense—*He help and shield of all who trust in Him*.

The *house of Aaron* (which designation may embrace the whole tribe, whose special duty it was to minister in sacred things) is particularly noted, "because it was proper that it should go forward at the head of the people, in the way of trusting in the Lord."—*Hengstenberg*.

*The Lord shall increase you more and more* ; literally, *shall add upon you*, shall multiply His blessings or benefits upon you ; or, as Horsley : "Jehovah will do yet more for you, For you and for your children."

- 15 Ye are blessed of the LORD,  
Which made heaven and earth.
- 16 The heaven, *even* the heavens, are the LORD's :  
But the earth hath he given to the children of men.
- 17 The dead praise not the LORD,  
Neither any that go down into silence.
- 18 But we will bless the LORD  
From this time forth and for evermore.  
Praise the LORD.

## PSALM CXVI.

This Psalm is one of thanksgiving to God for some signal deliverance from danger. Some suppose it to have been written by King Hezekiah, on his recovery from sickness, and the prolongation of his life; and that verse 11 may be an acknowledgment of his having doubted the truth of the promise made through the prophet Isaiah. Whether there is any truth or not in these conjectures, the Psalm appears very appropriate to Hezekiah's circumstances; but the Chaldaisms which appear in this Psalm rather bespeak a later period.

- 1 I LOVE the LORD, because he hath heard  
My voice *and* my supplications.

15. This verse "alludes to the blessing of Melchizedek, Gen. xiv. 19: 'Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth,' which was uttered in him on behalf of his posterity."—*Hengstenberg*.

16. *The heaven, even the heavens, &c.* Both are plural in the Hebrew: more correctly, *The heavens are the Lord's heavens*. "The Psalmist draws from the fact, that God, retaining only heaven for Himself, has given, as a free gift, rich in love, the earth to the children of men (compare Gen. i. 28), a ground of consolation, in view of the circumstances which threatened destruction to the people of God. He cannot therefore permit it to be robbed of the occupants assigned to it by Him. He shall rather maintain us, is added in verses 17, 18, because He would otherwise be robbed of the song of praise which only His Church on the earth can give Him. The people of God cannot die, because the praise of God would die with them."—*Hengstenberg*.

17. *That go down into silence*; see on Psalm xciv. 17.

18. *But we, &c.* Several of the old versions read: *But we who live will bless the Lord, &c.*

PSALM cxvi. 1. *I love the Lord, because, &c.* In the Hebrew the conjunction immediately follows the verb: *I love, because the Lord hath heard*, or, as some render, *I rejoice, because, &c.* The former sense appears to be sup-

- 2 Because he hath inclined his ear unto me,  
Therefore will I call upon *him* as long as I live.
- 3 The sorrows of death compassed me,  
And the pains of hell gat hold upon me :  
I found trouble and sorrow.
- 4 Then called I upon the name of the LORD ;  
O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.
- 5 Gracious is the LORD, and righteous ;  
Yea, our God is merciful.
- 6 The LORD preserveth the simple :  
I was brought low, and he helped me.
- 7 Return unto thy rest, O my soul ;  
For the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.
- 8 For thou hast delivered my soul from death,  
Mine eyes from tears,  
And my feet from falling.
- 9 I will walk before the LORD,  
In the land of the living.
- 10 I believed, therefore have I spoken :  
I was greatly afflicted.

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ed by a comparison with Psalm xviii. 1, the language of the next three verses being borrowed from verses 3-6 of David's magnificent song of deliverance. *My voice and my supplications*; rather, *the voice of my supplications*. See on Psalm xviii. 4, 5.

*The Lord preserveth the simple.* The Septuagint and Vulgate, *infants*, the helpless. Our word *simple* very correctly represents the original, fitting of the same diversity of meaning, viz., *ignorant*, or *inexperienced*; in a moral sense, either *bad* or *good*, *foolish*, *void of hypocrisy*, *sincere*. It may be understood here, remarks Kimchi, "not only of those, who, being unable to ward off danger commit themselves entirely to the guardianship of God; but also of those who, possessed of skill and experience, do not rely upon them." "When believers, in their sufferings, have neither skill nor reason to find out means of escape, God's wisdom is used on their behalf, and the secret guardianship of His providence meets all the perils which beset their safety."—*Calvin, quoted by Hengstenberg*. *I will, rather shall, walk before the Lord in the land of the living*; being preserved from death, as expressed in the previous verses.



- 11 I said in my haste,  
All men are liars.
- 12 What shall I render unto the LORD  
For all his benefits toward me ?
- 13 I will take the cup of salvation,  
And call upon the name of the LORD.

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11. *I said in my haste*; rather shame, confusion, or trepidation; see on Psalm xxxi. 22. *All men are liars*; i.e., disappoint the expectations placed in them, whence the inference, as expressed in Psalm cxviii. 8, 9: "It is better to trust in the Lord," &c.—Compare Psalm lxii. 8, 9.

13. *I will take the cup of salvation*. Horsley renders: "I will accept the cup of deliverance;" and Hengstenberg, after remarking that the cup is a frequent figurative representation of what is allotted to each man, his good or bad fortune, adds, "No reference can be understood as made to the cup of thanksgiving at the thank offerings, or to the sacrificial feast connected with them, for this cup is a mere fiction." It appears, however, that the Jews were accustomed to hold a feast in connection with the sacrifices, in commemoration of any signal favour or deliverance they had experienced; and they had also in their families a more private cup of thanksgiving, in acknowledgment, not only of such mercies, but of the ordinary benefits of life, when the master of the house, having taken the wine-cup, and called upon the name of the Lord, saying, "Blessed be the Lord, the Maker of the world, who has created the fruit of the vine," presented it in order to those present. This was especially the case at the Passover, and, though the cup is not mentioned in the original institution, it appears from the narrative of the last partaken of by Christ with His disciples, that it had then become an established part of the celebration. To the previous question of the Psalmist, *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?* the words, *I will take*, or *lift up*, the cup of salvation, furnish a more appropriate reply, considered as denoting, whether in a literal or only figurative sense, in allusion to the custom referred to, the expression or act of thanksgiving, the only recompence which man can render to God for His benefits, rather than the acceptance of them, which is implied in what precedes; and this view is confirmed by the three concluding verses, where the sentiment of the present and the next verse is reiterated, and the clause, *I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving*, answers to *I will take the cup of salvation*, here. A somewhat analogous usage and expression prevailed among the Greeks, who were accustomed to dedicate cups, with suitable inscriptions, as votive offerings to their deities; and that in which they made libations to Jupiter, after the recovery of their freedom, was called the *free bowl*, or *bowl of liberty*.—See Kitto's *Illustrated Commentary*, and Burder's *Oriental Customs*.

- 14 I will pay my vows unto the LORD  
Now in the presence of all his people.  
15 Precious in the sight of the LORD  
Is the death of his saints.  
16 O LORD, truly I *am* thy servant;  
I *am* thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid :  
Thou hast loosed my bonds.  
17 I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving,  
And will call upon the name of the LORD.  
18 I will pay my vows unto the LORD,  
Now in the presence of all his people,  
19 In the courts of the LORD's house,  
In the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.  
Praise ye the LORD.

#### PSALM CXVII.

This short Psalm, the first verse of which is quoted by the apostle Paul (Rom. xv. 11), consists of a doxology, and may have been designed to be used as a commencement or conclusion in connection with others. It is written as a part of the preceding in thirty-two MSS.

- 1 O PRAISE the LORD, all ye nations :  
Praise him, all ye people.  
2 For his merciful kindness is great toward us :  
And the truth of the LORD *endureth* for ever.  
Praise ye the LORD.

#### PSALM CXVIII.

This Psalm appears to be a triumphant song of thanksgiving, partaking both of an individual and national character. In the opening verses, the

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15. *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints; i.e., "the Lord accounts the death of His saints of so much importance, that He will not suffer their enemies to cut them off before His appointed time; all the circumstances of their death being regulated by infinite wisdom and love for their final and eternal benefit."*—*B.C.B.*

16. See on Psalm lxxxvi. 16. The last clause, *Thou hast loosed my bonds*, appears to allude to the case of the servant, who refused to accept his liberty in the year of release, and whose ear was to be bored, in token of perpetual servitude—Ex. xxi. 2-6. *Thou hast given me my liberty, but I will still be thine, and serve thee for ever.*

people are called upon to join in praising God, under the same appellations as are employed in Psalm cxv. 9-13 (*Israel, the house of Aaron, and those that fear the Lord*), from which it is probable that the two Psalms were composed by the same author or at about the same period. The prominence given to *the house of Aaron*, with the absence of any direct allusion to royalty, has led to the inference that they were written after the return from Babylon, when the secular and ecclesiastical authority very much centred in the High Priest; and Hengstenberg assigns the present Psalm to the laying of the foundation of the second temple, to which he supposes verse 22 specially refers, and on which occasion, according to Ezra iii. 10, 11, the priests and Levites "sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever." As, however, the chief part of the services of the sanctuary at all times devolved upon *the house of Aaron*, the position assigned them by the Psalmist is by no means incompatible with the co-existence of royalty; and this, indeed, seems almost implied in verses 10-12, which, with many others, are of an individual character, and appear most appropriate, regarded as the words of a king who had been delivered from danger arising from foreign enemies. If written by David, the Psalm was probably designed as a public commemoration of the goodness of God when He had established him in his kingdom, and "given him rest round about from all his enemies." —2 Sam. vii. 1. The frequent change of persons renders it probable that the Psalm was chanted by alternate choirs. The arrangement proposed by Bishop Horsley, though perhaps rather too minute and artificial, brings out the several parts in bold relief, and gives them great force and beauty. He considers the preceding and the present Psalm as one poem—"a triumphant processional song. The scene passes at the front gate of the temple," or tabernacle, if referred to the time of David. "A conqueror, with his train, appears before it, and demands admittance, to return thanks for his victory and final success in an expedition of great difficulty and danger. The conqueror and his train sing Psalm cxvii. and the first four verses of Psalm cxviii., as they advance to the gate, in this manner—Psalm cxvii., chorus of the whole procession; Psalm cxviii., verses 1, 2, 3, each a single voice; verse 4, the whole procession. Arrived at the gate, the conqueror alone sings verses 5, 6, 7; verses 8, 9, are sung by his train, in chorus; verses 10-14, the conqueror alone; verses 15, 16, his train in chorus; verses 17-19, the conqueror alone; verse 20, the priests and Levites within, while they throw open the gates; verse 21, the conqueror alone; verses 22-24, the priests and Levites within, in chorus; verse 25, the conqueror alone, within the gates; verse 26, the priests and Levites within, in chorus; verse 27, the conqueror's train, in chorus; verse 28, the conqueror alone; verse 29, the united chorus of the priests and Levites and the conqueror's train, all within the gates. Now the Jewish temple was a type of heaven. The gate of the temple, therefore, is the gate of heaven; the priests within represent the angelic host attending round the throne of God in heaven; the Conqueror is Messiah, and His train the redeemed."

1 O GIVE thanks unto the LORD; for *he is good*:  
Because his mercy *endureth* for ever.

- 2 Let Israel now say,  
That his mercy *endureth* for ever,
- 8 Let the house of Aaron now say,  
That his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- 4 Let them now that fear the LORD say,  
That his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- 5 I called upon the LORD in distress :  
The LORD answered me, *and set me* in a large place.
- 6 The LORD is on my side ; I will not fear :  
What can man do unto me ?
- 7 The LORD taketh my part with them that help me :  
Therefore shall I see *my desire* upon them that hate me.
- 8 *It is* better to trust in the LORD,  
Than to put confidence in man.
- 9 *It is* better to trust in the LORD,  
Than to put confidence in princes.
- 10 All nations compassed me about :  
But in the name of the LORD will I destroy them.
- 11 They compassed me about ; yea, they compassed me about :  
But in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.
- 12 They compassed me about like bees ;  
They are quenched as the fire of thorns :  
For in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.

PSALM cxviii. 2. *Let Israel now say*; or, *Let Israel say*. The Hebrew word rendered *now* is not a particle of time, but of entreaty, frequently rendered, *I pray* or *beseech thee*; sometimes *O!* The latter would express the idea in this and the two next verses rather better than *now*, which we use in this sense, only in a direct address to the person to whom the request is made, as, *Do now grant me, &c.* In each clause of verse 25 the particle occurs both in its usual and in a more emphatic form, rendered respectively, *now*, and *I beseech thee*. In Psalm cxvi. 14, 18, it expresses earnest determination on the part of the speaker.

7. *The Lord taketh my part with them that help me*; literally, *is for me among my helpers*.—See on Psalm liv. 4. *Therefore shall I see (my desire) upon them that hate me*; rather, *Therefore shall I look (i.e., without fear) upon them that hate me*.—See on Psalm liv. 7, and the other parallel passages.

10-12. *I will destroy them*; rather, *I destroyed them*, as the reference is to a past event; but it would accord better with the structure of the original,

- 13 Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall :  
But the LORD helped me.
- 14 The LORD is my strength and song,  
And is become my salvation.
- 15 The voice of rejoicing and salvation  
Is in the tabernacles of the righteous :  
The right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.
- 16 The right hand of the LORD is exalted :  
The right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.

where the conjunction in these three passages follows, not precedes, *in the name of the Lord*, to supply the word *trust* from verses 8, 9, and render, *In the name of the Lord I trusted, that I should destroy, or cut them off*. "Dr. Delaney justly remarks that it is familiar with David to couch such images in three words as would, in the hands of Homer, be the materials of his noblest, most enlarged, and dignified descriptions. The reader has here, in miniature, two of the finest images in Homer. The idea of an army resembling a fire is common both to David and Homer; but the idea of that fire being quenched when the army was conquered is peculiar to the Psalmist." —B.C.B. A fire of thorns or twigs is easily kindled, and for a short time crackles and blazes violently, but soon spends itself, and leaves but little vestige of its existence. The lines of Homer referred to are, as rendered by Cowper (*Iliad*, Book II. l. 549) :—

"As when devouring flames some forest seize  
On the high mountains, splendid from afar  
The blaze appears, so, moving on the plain,  
The steel-clad host innumerable flashed to heaven."

Another passage compares the Grecians mustering to council, to a swarm of bees; but the following, from Cowper's version, is more appropriate to the present purpose (*Iliad*, Book II. l. 564) :—

"As in the hovel where the peasant milks  
His kine in spring time, when his pails are filled,  
Thick clouds of humming insects on the wing  
Swarm all around him; so the Grecians swarmed,  
An unsummed multitude, o'er all the plain,  
Bright armed, high crested, and athirst for war."

14. "This verse is, like Isaiah xii. 2, taken from the song of Moses, the servant of God (Ex. xv. 2), the first of the Church's songs of thanksgiving, and which forms the foundation for all the later songs to the end of time. —Compare Rev. xv. 3."—*Hengstenberg*. See also verse 21.

- 17 I shall not die, but live,  
And declare the works of the LORD.  
18 The LORD hath chastened me sore :  
But he hath not given me over unto death.  
19 Open to me the gates of righteousness :  
I will go into them, and I will praise the LORD ;  
20 This gate of the LORD,  
Into which the righteous shall enter.  
21 I will praise thee : for thou hast heard me,  
And art become my salvation.  
22 The stone *which* the builders refused  
Is become the head *stone* of the corner.  
23 This is the LORD's doing ;  
It is marvellous in our eyes.  
24 This *is* the day *which* the LORD hath made ;  
We will rejoice and be glad in it.  
25 Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD :  
O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.

17. *I shall not die ; i.e., by the hand of my enemies.*

19, 20. *Open to me the gates of righteousness ; i.e., of the sanctuary, into which the Psalmist demands admittance, that he may praise the Lord : This is the gate of the Lord, into which, it is responded, the righteous shall enter ; but which was vigilantly guarded, "that none who was unclean in anything could enter in."*—2 Chron. xxiii. 19.

22. *The stone which the builders refused is become the head, rather chief, stone of the corner ; i.e., the foundation on which the strength of the structure wholly depends. This figure "is applicable to David, for he sprang from a noble family, was rejected by Saul and his party, and yet subsequently came the sovereign of Judea ;" "but a much more complete application it may be found in our Lord, and so He himself applies it in Matt. xxi. 42, where the passage is further cited for the same purpose in the Acts and the Epistles. The Jews rejected His mission, yet He succeeded in establishing His Church, while He himself, saith Bishop Horne, 'is the main support of the edifice, and a centre of union for Jew and Gentile, the two parts of which it consisted. This was the work of God and the admiration of men.' Many of the Jewish Rabbis themselves consider Messiah to be the subject of this passage."*—*Phillips*.

24. *This is the day which the Lord hath made ; i.e., made one of special blessing and blessing.*

25, 26. *The joyful acclamations of the multitude who accompanied our*

- 26 Blessed *be* he that cometh in the name of the LORD :  
We have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.
- 27 God *is* the LORD, which hath shewed us light :  
Bind the sacrifice with cords, *even* unto the horns of the altar.
- 28 Thou *art* my God, and I will praise thee :  
*Thou art* my God, I will exalt thee.
- 29 Oh give thanks unto the LORD ; for *he is* good :  
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.

## PSALM CXIX.

Many commentators have assigned this Psalm to David ; and verses 9, 23, 46, 141, and 161, have been considered especially appropriate to his circumstances when a young man, and oppressed and persecuted by Saul and his party. But it wants the impassioned fervour which usually characterizes the Psalms of David, and, if composed by him, it must have been, as Bishop Patrick remarks, when he was "in a very sedate condition, under no extraordinary emotions, but quietly considering things as they were brought to his remembrance." Others have attributed the Psalm to one of the prophets

Lord on His entrance into Jerusalem (Matt. xxi. 9) were evidently taken from this passage. *Hosanna* is a contraction of the Hebrew of the words, *Save now*.

27. "The sense of this verse is—Jehovah is God, in the full sense of the word, and He has really shown this by bestowing salvation upon us, His people ; let us, therefore, do our part, and show our gratitude to Him by our offerings. The relation of the two clauses to each other is precisely the same as, *Thou art my God, and (therefore) I will praise thee*, in verse 28." —*Hengstenberg*. The Targum paraphrases the second clause thus : "Bind a youngling for the festival sacrifice with cords, until ye have sacrificed it, and sprinkled the blood upon the horns of the altar." Phillips considers the text elliptical, and equivalent to "Bind the sacrifice with cords, and bring it to the horns of the altar ;" and thus the sense would be the same as the Chaldee, which, he adds, "is doubtless the correct one ; for as to binding the sacrifice to the horns of the altar after the animal was killed, we do not find any such custom in the Mosaic law." But, though there would be no apparent object in binding the slain animal, it may, perhaps, have been customary to tie the intended victim with a cord to the horns of the altar, in readiness for the performance of the sacrificial rites. The Septuagint and Vulgate render, "Celebrate a feast with thick boughs, even the horns of the altar," probably alluding to the feast of tabernacles, but not very clear, or accordant with the Hebrew text.

of the Captivity, as Jeremiah or Daniel, to whom, more especially the latter, the above-mentioned verses are no less applicable than to David. "There seem," remarks Jebb, "many allusions to his history: for example, his constant and persevering practice of religious exercises, his nightly meditations, his rendering of praise at stated periods, *seven times a day*, and this openly—*will speak of thy testimonies even before kings*; while the persecutions of the iniquitous nobles of Babylon are plainly alluded to in these words: *Princes id sit and speak against me*; that is, they brought a formal and judicial accusation against me: *Princes have persecuted me without a cause*; *The proud have forged a lie against me*; *The proud have had me greatly in derision*; *The proud have digged pits for me*; the latter expression possibly referring to the den of lions. The meditative and faithful character of the whole psalm is exactly accordant with that 'greatly beloved' prophet, who was in such constant communion with God; emphatically, a man of prayer, and to whom, in the night visions, were revealed the deep mysteries of God's providence—those future events in which the law and the prophets were fulfilled." Though the authorship of this Psalm is entirely a matter of conjecture, and the style of its composition presents no decided indication of any particular epoch, yet the inferences deducible from this source, especially in respect to the extent and regularity of the alphabetical arrangement, are in favour of the later date; for we find from the Lamentations of Jeremiah, of which each chapter, except the last, is alphabetical, and the psalm, consisting of stanzas of three lines, each commencing with the same letter, closely resembles the structure of the Psalm, that this mode of composition was then carried to a greater extent than appears to have been the case in earlier times. The peculiar feature in the composition of this psalm is the continual recurrence of several characteristic words, as designations of the Divine law, the excellence of which is its theme. The terms so employed are, *law*, *testimonies*, *precepts*, *statutes*, *commandments*, *judgments*, and *word*, or *saying*, one of which (and sometimes two) is found in each verse, except verses 5, 37, and 122; but in the two former their place supplied by the *way* of the Lord, in the sense of the rule of conduct, so that verse 122 is the only one without a characteristic word. Though these designations may often be used interchangeably, they are not to be regarded as mere synonyms, but as designating the Divine law under different aspects in respect to its promulgation or reception. The following definitions are derived from Jebb, who supports them by numerous citations, showing the appropriate application of the respective terms by the Psalmist:—1. *Law*. The Hebrew word is formed from a verb which means to aim, direct, guide. It means God's law in general, whether it be that universal rule called the law of nature (Rom. ii. 14, 15), or that which was revealed to His Church by Jesus, and perfected by Christ. In strictness, *the law* means a plain rule of conduct, rather placed clearly in man's sight than enforced by any compulsion—that is to say, this word does not necessarily include its sanctions. 2. *Testimonies*, from the verb to bear witness, to testify. The ark of the covenant is so called, as are the two tables of stone and the tabernacle (Ex. xvi. 34, xxxi. 7; Lev. xxiv. 3, &c.), the earnest or witnesses of God's covenant among His people. *Testimonies* are more particularly God's revealed law; the witnesses and confirmation of His promises to His people, the earnest of His future salvation. 3. *Precepts*, from a verb to appoint, to place in trust; appointments of God entrusted to man, and for



which he is responsible as an intelligent being. 4. *Statutes*. The verb from which this word is formed means to *engrave*, or *inscribe*. The word denotes a definite, prescribed, written law. The term is applied to Joseph's law about the portion of the priests in Egypt (Gen. xlvii. 26), to the law or the Passover (Ex. xii. 14), &c. But in this Psalm it has a more internal meaning—that moral law of God which is engraven on the fleshy tables of the heart (2 Cor. iii. 3; Jer. xxxi. 33), the inmost and spiritual apprehension of His will, not so obvious as the law and the *testimonies*, and a matter of more direct spiritual communication than His *precepts*. 5. *Commandments*, from the verb to *command*, or *ordain*. Such was God's command to Adam about the tree, to Noah about constructing the ark—Gen. iii. 11, vi. 22. The *commandments* are God's law positively enjoined, the distinction not being the exhibition, as in *law*; the more particular revelation, as in *testimonies*; the commendation to the conscience, as in *precepts*; or to the inmost nature, as in *statutes*; but the specific command. 6. *Judgments*, from a verb to *govern*, to *judge*, or *determine*; mean judicial ordinances or decisions, legal sanctions. In Exodus xxi., after the *commandments*, which are called the words of the law, follow the *judgments*—those statutes for the governing of the people in spirituals and temporals, which involve the details of forensic cognizance, the pronouncing and performing of judicial sentences and acts. *Judgments* mean here, as regards God, His righteous distribution of good and evil, His providential dealings; as regards man, the conformity to God's law, the acceptance of His sanctions, the submission to His sentences. 7. *Word*. There are two terms quite distinct in the Hebrew, but both rendered *word* in our version. The one, *dabar*, answering to the *logos* of the Greek Testament, signifies the word of God in its higher and primary sense; the announcement of God's revealed will, His command, His oracle; at times, the special communication to His prophets. In this Psalm, it may be considered as God's revealed commandments in general, as a revealed promise of certain blessings to the righteous, as a rule of conduct, a channel of illumination. The cognate term, *imrah*, or *emer*, answering to the Greek *rema*, and our *saying*, more properly means the actual articulation, the personal and immediate address. The *word* of the Lord came *saying*, is a frequent expression in the Prophets; the *word* being a more concrete and general term. It means something more personal to the individual than *word*—a special revelation, a peculiar promise, over and above the ordinary revelation of God's law; but it is used in the same sense, and with the same application as *word*.\* Though no strict method is observed by the Psalmist in the arrangement of his subjects, yet the Psalm should not be regarded (as commentators have been too much disposed to treat it) as a collection of independent reflections or aphorisms; and, though "the mind of the prophet is free, and flowing, and discursive, still," remarks Jebb, "this easy flow of thought implies connection and association;" and "instances can undoubtedly be shown of passages which maintain a beautiful sequence and connection between their several members. To enter into anything like an analysis of this Psalm, which has justly been considered in all ages of the Church as a storehouse of religious wisdom, and, as interpreted by the light of the Gospel, of Christian philosophy, would require a volume; and it is well known that upon no portion

\* *Word* is printed in even small capitals throughout the Psalm where it stands for the Hebrew *imrah*.

of Holy Scripture have so many practical commentaries been written. It must suffice to give a few of the more obvious instances of design and connection. The beginning makes mention of the way of the Lord as that which it is a happiness to find. The seeking of this way forms the subjects of the first two divisions. In the fourth division, observe the repetition of the same sentiment :—

My soul cleaveth unto the dust ;  
Quickened thou me according to thy word.

Which is presently repeated with greater earnestness (verse 28) :—

My soul melteth for heaviness ;  
Strengthen thou me according to thy word.

And then follows the contrast between the way of falsehood and the way of truth, which latter is declared to be the way of God's commandments. In like manner, observe the connection of the whole fifth division, of which the way of God is the commencing theme, the latter part being a prayer for deliverance from vanity, and from the reproach which he fears. The sixth division is a prayer for fortitude and wisdom, that he may openly and publicly persevere in the service of God. There is a connection between the seventh and eighth : both speak of the aggression of enemies, and of his own nightly meditations and thanksgiving ; the former being continued through many subsequent divisions. The eleventh division, in the first three distichs and towards the end, represents him *fainting* for God's salvation and His word. The twelfth declares the unchangeable and imperishable nature of God's word. The wisdom imparted by the Divine teaching is detailed in the thirteenth division ; and he declares, in conclusion, his love for the words of God, and his hatred of every path of falsehood. In the nineteenth division occurs a beautiful instance of alternate parallelism, which shows the constancy of his devotions both by night and day :—

I cried with my whole heart ;  
Hear me, O Lord : I will keep thy statutes.  
I cried unto thee ;  
Save me, and I shall keep thy testimonies.  
I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried :  
I hoped in thy word.  
Mine eyes prevent the night watches,  
That I might meditate in thy word (saying).

The twentieth is a connected prayer for deliverance from persecutors. In the twenty-second there is an alternation of connected thought similar to that in the nineteenth :—

Let my cry come near before thee, O Lord :  
Give me understanding according to thy word.  
Let my supplication come before thee :  
Deliver me according to thy word (saying).  
My lips shall utter praise,  
When thou hast taught me thy statutes.  
My tongue shall speak of thy word (saying) :  
For all thy commandments are righteousness.

As the Psalm proceeds, the intensity of devotion and of praise becomes

stronger; in its later petitions, from the nineteenth division inclusive, prayer for deliverance is more fervent. The last division refers to the theme of the first—the way of God has been found; and the Psalmist concludes his meditations with an allusion to his former wanderings, and a prayer to be kept in the right way."

℣ ALEPH.

- 1 BLESSED *are* the undefiled in the way,  
Who walk in the law of the LORD.
- 2 Blessed *are* they that keep his testimonies,  
And that seek him with the whole heart.
- 3 They also do no iniquity :  
They walk in his ways.
- 4 Thou hast commanded *us* to keep thy precepts diligently.
- 5 Oh that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes !
- 6 Then shall I not be ashamed,  
When I have respect unto all thy commandments.
- 7 I will praise thee with uprightness of heart,  
When I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.
- 8 I will keep thy statutes :  
Oh forsake me not utterly.

℣ BETH.

- 9 Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way ?  
By taking heed *thereto* according to thy word.
- 10 With my whole heart have I sought thee :  
Oh let me not wander from thy commandments.
- 11 Thy WORD have I hid in mine heart,  
That I might not sin against thee.
- 12 Blessed *art* thou, O LORD :  
Teach me thy statutes.

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PSALM cxi. 1. *Blessed are the undefiled.* The marginal rendering, *perfect*, or *sincere*, is more correct. *In the way*, does not precisely express the sense of the original. It is literally, *the perfect*, or *sincere of way*; that is, those who pursue a course of integrity and sincerity. The phrase is identical with the "Integer vitæ scelisque purus" of Horace, though doubtless with a far higher standard in view than that of the Roman poet—"an Israelite, indeed, in whom is no guile."

5. *Oh that my ways were directed; or established.*

- 13 With my lips have I declared  
All the judgments of thy mouth.  
14 I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies,  
As *much as* in all riches.  
15 I will meditate in thy precepts,  
And have respect unto thy ways.  
16 I will delight myself in thy statutes :  
I will not forget thy word.

י GIMEL.

- 17 Deal bountifully with thy servant,  
That I may live, and keep thy word.  
18 Open thou mine eyes,  
That I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.  
19 I *am* a stranger in the earth :  
Hide not thy commandments from me.  
20 My soul breaketh for the longing  
That it *hath* unto thy judgments at all times.  
21 Thou hast rebuked the proud *that are* cursed :  
Which do err from thy commandments.  
22 Remove from me reproach and contempt ;  
For I have kept thy testimonies.  
23 Princes also did sit *and* speak against me :  
But thy servant did meditate in thy statutes.  
24 Thy testimonies also *are* my delight  
And my counsellors.

ד DALETH.

- 25 My soul cleaveth unto the dust :  
Quicken thou me according to thy word.

---

17. *Deal bountifully with*, Hebrew *reward*, *thy servant* ; let him have the turn of his faith and prayers.

21. The word *proud* is frequently used, especially in the present Psalm, to note the lawless or wicked, arrogant transgressors of the Divine law.—See verses 51, 69, 78, 85, 122.

- 26 I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me :  
Teach me thy statutes.
- 27 Make me to understand the way of thy precepts :  
So shall I talk of thy wondrous works.
- 28 My soul melteth for heaviness :  
Strengthen thou me according unto thy word.
- 29 Remove from me the way of lying :  
And grant me thy law graciously.
- 30 I have chosen the way of truth :  
Thy judgments have I laid *before me*.
- 31 I have stuck unto thy testimonies :  
O LORD, put me not to shame.
- 32 I will run the way of thy commandments,  
When thou shalt enlarge my heart.

¶ HE.

- 33 Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes ;  
And I shall keep it *unto* the end.
- 34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law ;  
Yea, I shall observe it with *my* whole heart.
- 35 Make me to go in the path of thy commandments ;  
For therein do I delight.
- 36 Incline my heart unto thy testimonies,  
And not to covetousness.

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29. *Grant me thy law graciously.* The Syriac translators, apparently from a Hebrew reading, varying slightly from the present text, render, "Teach me thy law," which Boothroyd adopts, remarking that "the impropriety of the common reading and version must be apparent to every reader." The correctness of this sentence may, however, reasonably be called in question. The common reading is supported by all the other old translators, though they render it paraphrastically, *Be gracious to me by, or according to, thy law*; but the word signifies to *grant as a matter of favour*; and the literal rendering of our version affords a good sense, and one quite in accordance with the general purport of the Psalm, and with other passages of Scripture, which speak of the Divine law as a favour bestowed. "What nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?"—Deut. iv. 8; see also Neh. ix. 13, 14; Jer. xxxi. 33, 34; Ezek. xx. 11.

- 37 Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity ;  
*And quicken thou me in thy way.*  
 38 Stablish thy word unto thy servant,  
*Who is devoted to thy fear.*  
 39 Turn away my reproach which I fear :  
*For thy judgments are good.*  
 40 Behold, I have longed after thy precepts :  
*Quicken me in thy righteousness.*

† VAU.

- 41 Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD,  
*Even thy salvation, according to thy word.*  
 42 So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me :  
*For I trust in thy word.*  
 43 And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth ;  
*For I have hoped in thy judgments.*  
 44 So shall I keep thy law  
*Continually for ever and ever.*  
 45 And I will walk at liberty :  
*For I seek thy precepts.*  
 46 I will speak of thy testimonies also  
*Before kings, and will not be ashamed.*  
 47 And I will delight myself  
*In thy commandments, which I have loved.*  
 48 My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which  
*I have loved ;*  
*And I will meditate in thy statutes.*

† ZAIN.

- 49 Remember the word unto thy servant,  
*Upon which thou hast caused me to hope.*

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38. *Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear.* The Hebrew is simply *who*, or *which*, *is to thy fear* ; and the antecedent may be *thy servant*, supplying the ellipsis, as our translators have done ; or *word, which is to thy fear, i.e., which promotes the fear of thee*, so that the sense will be, as expressed by some translators, *in order that I may fear thee* ; or, as others understand it, *which is attached, or belongs to, thy fear, i.e., my promise to those who fear thee.*

- 50 This is my comfort in my affliction :  
 For thy word hath quickened me.
- 51 The proud have had me greatly in derision :  
 Yet have I not declined from thy law.
- 52 I remembered thy judgments of old, O LORD ;  
 And have comforted myself.
- 53 Horror hath taken hold upon me  
 Because of the wicked that forsake thy law.
- 54 Thy statutes have been my songs  
 In the house of my pilgrimage.
- 55 I have remembered thy name, O LORD, in the night,  
 And have kept thy law.
- 56 This I had,  
 Because I kept thy precepts.

□ CHETH.

- 57 Thou art my portion, O LORD :  
 I have said that I would keep thy words.
- 58 I entreated thy favour with my whole heart :  
 Be merciful unto me according to thy word.
- 59 I thought on my ways,  
 And turned my feet unto thy testimonies.
- 60 I made haste, and delayed not  
 To keep thy commandments.
- 61 The bands of the wicked have robbed me :  
 But I have not forgotten thy law.

---

50. *This is my comfort in my affliction, for, or that, thy word hath quickened me, i.e., given me life, or revived me ; which is the primary and Scriptural sense of our word quicken.*

53. *Horror ; rather, burning zeal, or indignation. The Hebrew "properly signifies the pestilential burning wind, called by the Arabs simoom ; and is here used in a figurative sense for the most horrid mental distress."—B.C.B. See note on Psalm xi. 6, where the same word occurs, and is rendered horrible tempest.*

56. *This I had, because, rather that, I kept thy precepts ; literally, this was to me, i.e., this was my comfort, that I kept thy precepts ; which is nearly the reading of the Syriac.*

61. *The bands, i.e., snares, or, as rendered in the margin, the companies, of the wicked have robbed me ; more correctly, surrounded, or encompassed me.*

- 62 At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee,  
Because of thy righteous judgments.  
63 I *am* a companion of all *them* that fear thee,  
And of them that keep thy precepts.  
64 The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy :  
Teach me thy statutes.

2 TETH.

- 65 Thou hast dealt well with thy servant,  
O LORD, according unto thy word.  
66 Teach me good judgment and knowledge :  
For I have believed thy commandments.  
67 Before I was afflicted I went astray :  
But now have I kept thy word.  
68 Thou *art* good, and doest good ;  
Teach me thy statutes.  
69 The proud have forged a lie against me :  
*But* I will keep thy precepts with *my* whole heart.  
70 Their heart is as fat as grease ;  
*But* I delight in thy law.  
71 *It is* good for me that I have been afflicted ;  
That I might learn thy statutes.  
72 The law of thy mouth is better unto me  
Than thousands of gold and silver.

3 JOD.

- 73 Thy hands have made me and fashioned me :  
Give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.

---

66. *Teach me good judgment and knowledge ;* rather, "*Teach me (to have) good taste and discernment—that faculty of the mind by which I may discern, distinguish, judge rightly, and relish things moral and spiritual.*"—C.B.

70. *Their heart is as fat as grease ;* rather, *their heart is become gross, or insensible, as fat.* The expression is frequently employed by the sacred writers to denote moral or spiritual insensibility, often coupled with outward prosperity. See Deut. xxxii. 15 ; Psalm xvii. 10, and note ; Isaiah vi. 10 ; and the parallel passages in the New Testament.



- 74 They that fear thee will be glad when they see me ;  
Because I have hoped in thy word.
- 75 I know, O LORD, that thy judgments *are* right,  
And *that* thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.
- 76 Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort,  
According to thy word unto thy servant.
- 77 Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live :  
For thy law *is* my delight.
- 78 Let the proud be ashamed ; for they dealt perversely with  
me without a cause :  
*But* I will meditate in thy precepts.
- 79 Let those that fear thee turn unto me,  
And those that have known thy testimonies.
- 80 Let my heart be sound in thy statutes ;  
That I be not ashamed.

▷ CAPH.

- 81 . My soul fainteth for thy salvation ;  
*But* I hope in thy word.
- 82 Mine eyes fail for thy word,  
Saying, When wilt thou comfort me ?
- 83 For I am become like a bottle in the smoke ;  
*Yet* do I not forget thy statutes.

---

82. *Mine eyes fail for thy word.* A familiar expression in the East, denoting longing desire. "Has a mother promised to visit her son or daughter, and should she not be able to go, the son or daughter will say, 'Alas! my mother promised to come to me. How long have I been looking for her! But a speck has grown on my eye—I cannot see; my eyes have failed me!' i.e., by looking so intensely for her coming."—*Roberts's Oriental Illustrations.*

83. *I am become like a bottle in the smoke.* The Psalmist may refer to the process of drying and preparing the skins to serve the purpose of bottles, as well as to their subsequent use. Those containing wine were probably hung up in the smoke in order to impart a mellowness and richness to the flavour of the liquor. "The peasantry of Asia," remarks Dr. Kitto, "keep many articles, both dry and liquid, in bottles of kid or goat-skin, which, for security, are hung against the wall or suspended from the roof of their humble dwellings. Here they soon become quite black with smoke; for, as in the dwellings of the peasantry there are seldom any chimneys, and the smoke

- 84 How many *are* the days of thy servant ?  
When wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute  
me ?
- 85 The proud have digged pits for me,  
Which *are* not after thy law.
- 86 All thy commandments *are* faithful :  
They persecute me wrongfully ; help thou me.
- 87 They had almost consumed me upon earth ;  
But I forsook not thy precepts.
- 88 Quicken me after thy lovingkindness ;  
So shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth.

↳ LAMED.

- 89 For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.
- 90 Thy faithfulness is unto all generations :  
Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.
- 91 They continue this day according to thine ordinances :  
For all *are* thy servants.
- 92 Unless thy law *had been* my delights,  
I should then have perished in mine affliction.
- 93 I will never forget thy precepts :  
For with them thou hast quickened me.
- 94 I *am* thine, save me ;  
For I have sought thy precepts.

an only escape through an aperture in the roof, or by the door, the apartment is full of dense smoke whenever a fire is kindled in it. When such vessels do not contain liquid, and are not quite filled by the solids which they hold, they contract a shrunk and shrivelled appearance, to which the Psalmist may also possibly allude, as well as to their blackness."—*Illustrated Commentary*.

85. See note on Psalm xxxv. 7. *Which are not after thy law.* The antecedent may be either *pits*, or *the proud, who are not*, i.e., act not, according to *thy law*. "The sense," remarks Phillips, "is more obvious according to his latter exposition ; for one does not see the force of the phrase, 'digging its which are not according to God's law,' as if pits might be dug which are according to it." This objection, however, would be removed by supplying the ellipsis in the original by *is*, instead of *are* : *Which, i.e., the act of digging pits, or laying snares, is not after thy law.*

89. *For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven ;* or, as the Syriac reads, "Thou art for ever, O Jehovah ; thy word is established in the heavens."

- 95 The wicked have waited for me to destroy me :  
*But I will consider thy testimonies.*  
 96 I have seen an end of all perfection :  
*But thy commandment is exceeding broad.*

□ MEM.

- 97 Oh how love I thy law !  
*It is my meditation all the day.*  
 98 Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than  
mine enemies :  
*For they are ever with me.*  
 99 I have more understanding than all my teachers :  
*For thy testimonies are my meditation.*  
 100 I understand more than the ancients,  
*Because I keep thy precepts.*  
 101 I have refrained my feet from every evil way,  
*That I might keep thy word.*  
 102 I have not departed from thy judgments :  
*For thou hast taught me.*  
 103 How sweet are thy words unto my taste !  
*Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth !*  
 104 Through thy precepts I get understanding :  
*Therefore I hate every false way.*

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96. *I have seen an end of all perfection, &c.* "That is, I have seen that all human wisdom or knowledge, however extensive, noble and excellent, has its bounds, and limit, and end ; but thy law, a transcript of thine own mind, is infinite, and extends to eternity."—*B.C.B.* For *all perfection*, some render *all hope*, or *expectation* ; but the former seems best supported.

103. See Psalm xix. 10. "To characterize words of instruction or affection by the quality of sweetness, and superlatively by the sweetness of honey, is still very common in the East."—*Kitto*. "An affectionate wife often says, 'My husband, your words are sweeter to me than honey ; yea, they are sweeter than the sugar-cane.' 'Alas ! my husband is gone,' says the widow ; 'how sweet were his words ; honey dropped from his mouth ; his words were ambrosia.'"—*Roberts's Oriental Illustrations*. The phraseology, however, at least so far as regards the use of the word *sweet*, is not confined to the East.

3 NUN.

- 105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,  
And a light unto my path.
- 106 I have sworn, and I will perform it,  
That I will keep thy righteous judgments.
- 107 I am afflicted very much :  
Quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word.
- 108 Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth,  
O LORD,  
And teach me thy judgments.
- 109 My soul is continually in my hand :  
Yet do I not forget thy law.
- 110 The wicked have laid a snare for me :  
Yet I erred not from thy precepts.
- 111 Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever :  
For they are the rejoicing of my heart.
- 112 I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes  
Always, *even unto the end.*

SAMECH.

- 113 I hate vain thoughts :  
But thy law do I love.
- 114 Thou art my hiding place and my shield :  
I hope in thy word.
- 115 Depart from me, ye evildoers :  
For I will keep the commandments of my God.

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109. *My soul is continually in my hand*; "rather, *my life*; i.e., it is in constant danger; every hour I am on the confines of death."—B.C.B.

113. *I hate vain thoughts.* The Hebrew word has been variously understood. "*Divided thoughts.* Gesenius renders, *ambiguities* (or *indecisions*) *in religion*; Luther, *inconstant fellows*; Septuagint, *transgressors*; Vulgate, *iniquitous*; and Jerome, *tumultuous*."—B.C.B. It is the same as that employed by the prophet Elijah when preparing to test the deity of Baal: "How long halt ye between two opinions?" (1 Kings xviii. 21); and probably denotes here fluctuating opinions, or distracted thoughts, tending to draw away the mind from its adherence to the law of God.

- 116 Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live :  
And let me not be ashamed of my hope.  
117 Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe :  
And I will have respect unto thy statutes continually.  
118 Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes :  
For their deceit is falsehood.  
119 Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth *like* dross ;  
Therefore I love thy testimonies.  
120 My flesh trembleth for fear of thee ;  
And I am afraid of thy judgments.

## Y AIN.

- 121 I have done judgment and justice :  
Leave me not to mine oppressors.  
122 Be surety for thy servant for good :  
Let not the proud oppress me.  
123 Mine eyes fail for thy salvation,  
And for the word of thy righteousness.  
124 Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy,  
And teach me thy statutes.  
125 I *am* thy servant ; give me understanding,  
That I may know thy testimonies.  
126 *It is* time for *thee*, LORD, to work :  
*For* they have made void thy law.  
127 Therefore I love thy commandments  
Above gold ; yea, above fine gold.

---

118. *For their deceit is falsehood.* This seems a mere truism. The more correct rendering is, *Their deceit, or cunning, is vain ; i.e., does not answer their purpose, or attain its object.* "Thir cunning is fallacious."—*Horsley.* "Vain is all their subtilty."—*Boothroyd.* The old versions read: *Their inward thought is unrighteous*; but this is a paraphrase, rather than a translation of the Hebrew.

119. *Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross.* "Thou countest all the wicked of the earth as dross."—*Boothroyd.* This reading is obtained by the change of one letter in the Hebrew, ך (ch), for ך (h), which is supported by several of the old versions. Either reading yields a good sense.

126. *It is time for thee, Lord, to work ; i.e., to take vengeance.*

- 128 Therefore I esteem all *thy* precepts concerning all things to  
be right ;  
And I hate every false way.

□ PE.

- 129 Thy testimonies are wonderful :  
Therefore doth my soul keep them.  
130 The entrance of thy words giveth light ;  
It giveth understanding unto the simple.  
131 I opened my mouth, and panted :  
For I longed for thy commandments.  
132 Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me,  
As thou usest to do unto those that love thy name.  
133 Order my steps in thy word :  
And let not any iniquity have dominion over me.  
134 Deliver me from the oppression of man :  
So will I keep thy precepts.  
135 Make thy face to shine upon thy servant ;  
And teach me thy statutes.  
136 Rivers of waters run down mine eyes,  
Because they keep not thy law.

§ TZADDI.

- 137 Righteous art thou, O LORD,  
And upright are thy judgments.

128. "The second *all* seems to have been omitted by all the versions except the Chaldee, which read simply, *all thy precepts*."—*B.C.B.* It may be regarded as emphatic: Therefore I approve all thy precepts whatever they may be.

130. *The entrance of thy words*; or *opening*, or *insight*. Septuagint, *manifestation*; Vulgate, *declaration*. "The Scriptures give satisfactory light to the mind upon every subject on which they treat; and speedily communicate more useful knowledge to the simplest believer upon the most important topics, than the acutest philosophers have been able to develope through successive ages."—*B.C.B.*

136. *Rivers of waters run down mine eyes*. "The Orientals are in general very copious weepers, and this strong hyperbole is still much employed among them to express the highest degree of lamenting grief."—*Kittó's Illustrated Commentary*. "Rivers of tears run down the face of that mother

- 138 Thy testimonies *that* thou hast commanded  
Are righteous and very faithful.
- 139 My zeal hath consumed me,  
Because mine enemies have forgotten thy words.
- 140 Thy word *is* very pure :  
Therefore thy servant loveth it.
- 141 I *am* small and despised :  
Yet do not I forget thy precepts.
- 142 Thy righteousness *is* an everlasting righteousness,  
And thy law *is* the truth.
- 143 Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me :  
Yet thy commandments *are* my delights.
- 144 The righteousness of thy testimonies *is* everlasting :  
Give me understanding, and I shall live.

יְהוָה.

- 145 I cried with *my* whole heart ;  
Hear me, O LORD : I will keep thy statutes.
- 146 I cried unto thee ; save me,  
And I shall keep thy testimonies.
- 147 I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried :  
I hoped in thy word.
- 148 Mine eyes prevent the *night* watches,  
That I might meditate in thy word.

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bereft of her children,' is a saying in common use. 'The water of her eyes runs like a river.'—*Roberts's Oriental Illustrations*.

140. *Thy word is very pure* ; Hebrew, *tried*, or *refined*. "Gold has need to be refined, but Thy word is purity itself, reflecting the image of Jehovah's character and government, and requiring and leading to purity of heart and life."—*B.C.B.*

142. "'Men,' as Bishop Horne observes, 'may decree wickedness by a law, or they may change their decrees, and with them what is right to-day may be wrong to-morrow ; but the law of God is righteousness, and it is truth to-day and for ever.'"—*B.C.B.*

147. *I prevented the dawning of the morning* ; i.e., "I anticipated, or rose before, the morning dawn, and was beforehand with the light itself."—*B.C.B.*

148. *Mine eyes prevent the night watches*. "The eyes of the Psalmist anticipate the night watches, inasmuch as they awake when the night

- 149 Hear my voice according unto thy lovingkindness :  
 O LORD, quicken me according to thy judgment,  
 150 They draw nigh that follow after mischief :  
 They are far from thy law.  
 151 Thou *art* near, O LORD ;  
 And all thy commandments *are* truth.  
 152 Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old  
 That thou hast founded them for ever.

□ RESH.

- 158 Consider mine affliction, and deliver me ;  
 For I do not forget thy law.  
 154 Plead my cause, and deliver me :  
 Quicken me according to thy word.  
 155 Salvation is far from the wicked :  
 For they seek not thy statutes.  
 156 Great *are* thy tender mercies, O LORD :  
 Quicken me according to thy judgments.  
 157 Many *are* my persecutors and mine enemies ;  
 Yet do I not decline from thy testimonies.  
 158 I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved ;  
 Because they kept not thy word.  
 159 Consider how I love thy precepts :  
 Quicken me, O LORD, according to thy lovingkindness.  
 160 Thy word *is* true from the beginning :  
 And every one of thy righteous judgments *endureth* for ever.

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watches come, therefore the expression means, The night watches find me awake."—*Hengstenberg*. Compare Psalm lxiii. 6. On *prevent*, see on Psalm xxi. 3.

152. *Concerning, or from, thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever.* The phrase, *of old*, generally denotes former ages ; but it is here employed in a more limited sense : long ago—from the time of my attaining to religious reflection.

160. *Thy word is true from the beginning ; Hebrew, the beginning of thy word is true.* "Dathe renders, *the sum of thy word* ; and Archbishop Seeker, *the principles of thy word* ; but the textual rendering appears to be more correct, as it is supported by the following line."—*B.C.B.*



## W SCHIN.

- 161 Princes have persecuted me without a cause:  
But my heart standeth in awe of thy word.
- 162 I rejoice at thy word,  
As one that findeth great spoil.
- 163 I hate and abhor lying:  
But thy law do I love.
- 164 Seven times a day do I praise thee,  
Because of thy righteous judgments.
- 165 Great peace have they which love thy law:  
And nothing shall offend them.
- 166 LORD, I have hoped for thy salvation,  
And done thy commandments.
- 167 My soul hath kept thy testimonies;  
And I love them exceedingly.
- 168 I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies:  
For all my ways are before thee.

## T TAU.

- 169 Let my cry come near before thee, O LORD:  
Give me understanding according to thy word.
- 170 Let my supplication come before thee:  
Deliver me according to thy word.
- 171 My lips shall utter praise,  
When thou hast taught me thy statutes.

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164. *Seven times*; i.e., "probably, *many times*, or *frequently*, as the term *seven* frequently denotes; but Rabbi Solomon says, that this is to be understood literally; for they praised God twice in the morning before reading the decalogue, and once after; twice in the evening before the same reading, and twice after; making in the whole seven times."—B.C.B.

165. *Nothing shall offend them*; i.e., make them stumble or fall. *Marginal rendering: They shall have no stumbling-block.*

169. *Let my cry, &c.* "This is really a fine image, though, from its frequent occurrence, it is little heeded. The Psalmist's cry for deliverance is here personified: made an intelligent being and sent up to the throne of grace to negotiate in his behalf. This prosopopœia is pursued in the next verse."—B.C.B.

171. *My lips shall utter, &c.*; "more literally and accordant with the context, *My lips shall pour forth praise, for thou hast taught me thy statutes.*"—

- 172 My tongue shall speak of thy word :  
For all thy commandments *are* righteousness.
- 173 Let thine hand help me ;  
For I have chosen thy precepts.
- 174 I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD ;  
And thy law *is* my delight.
- 175 Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee ;  
And let thy judgments help me.
- 176 I have gone astray like a lost sheep ;  
Seek thy servant ; for I do not forget thy commandments.

172. *My tongue shall speak of thy word.* "Piscator renders the verb here, *cantabit, shall sing* ; the correct sense for the language of praise is obviously intended."—*Phillips*.

I transcribe Merrick's beautiful paraphrase of the concluding division of this Psalm :—

- "1. O! let my cries thy heavenly seat  
Approach ; my prayer indulgent meet ;  
And give ; (for on thy word relies  
My hope), O! *give me* to be wise.
- "2. Behold, (for mercy lives in Thee),  
Behold me suppliant bend the knee,  
And let thy promised aid dispel  
The clouds of grief that o'er me dwell.
- "3. Thy sacred precepts taught to know,  
How shall my lips, great God, o'erflow  
With praise, and, touched with holy flame,  
The justice of thy laws proclaim.
- "4. While pleased I bow to thy command,  
Reach—in my rescue, reach thy hand ;  
Do thou, whose dictates warm my heart  
Thy long expected health impart.
- "5. O! let my soul, to life restored,  
Thy love, in lasting hymns record,  
While o'er my head its beams shall shine,  
And make thy great salvation mine.
- "6. Thine eyes in me the sheep behold,  
Whose feet have wandered from the fold,  
That guileless, helpless, strives in vain,  
To find its safe retreat again ;—

## PSALMS CXX. TO CXXXIV.

## THE SONGS OF DEGREES.

The Hebrew word rendered *Degree* in the titles of the ensuing fifteen Psalms, admits of great latitude of interpretation; the act of *ascending*, or *going up*, an *ascent*, *step*, *stair* or *degree*, an *eminence* or *elevated place*, and its meaning here has been the subject of no small amount of discussion and conjecture. Of the Psalms which bear this general title, four, viz., Psalms cxxii., cxxiv., cxxxi., cxxxiii., are by the same titles ascribed to David; one (Psalm cxxvii.) to Solomon; and one (Psalm cxxvi.) evidently commemorates the release from the Babylonish captivity. The term in question, therefore, must have been intended to denote some quality not incompatible with the fact of their having been composed at different periods, but at the same time characteristic of the whole series, and referring either to the style or matter of the Psalms themselves, the mode of reciting or using them, or the occasion for which they were originally designed, or to which they were subsequently appropriated. The principal explanations which have been adduced may be considered under these several heads: 1st—*The style or matter*. The subjects are various; but the Psalms, except Psalm cxxxii., are very short, and their style is sententious, concise, terse, and generally highly poetical. Several of them are remarkable for the repetition of one or more characteristic words, constituting the key-note or leading train of thought, and forming a sort of gradation, or step rhythm, by which the idea is carried forward from one verse to another, and which some suppose to have given rise to the title. This feature is most strikingly developed in Psalm cxxi., the subject of which is the security of the Divine preservation. This is denoted by the characteristic word *keep*, or *preserve* (the Hebrew being the same throughout), which occurs six times, with two subordinate ones, each occurring twice. It opens with a reference to the source of *help*, and that *help*, in verse 2, is declared to be in the Lord who made heaven and earth. In verse 3, the leading word *keep* is introduced in connection with another, expressive of the ever watchful care of God—"He that keepeth thee will not slumber," which is repeated and expanded in the next verse, "Behold, he that *keepeth* Israel shall neither *slumber* nor *sleep*." In verse 5 the leading idea is further illustrated by the figure of a *shade*—"The Lord is thy *keeper*, the Lord is thy *shade* upon thy right hand," which is continued and expanded in the following verse, "The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night;" and the two concluding verses are a further development of the subject, representing the unlimited extent and perpetuity of the Divine *keeping*—"The Lord shall *keep* thee from

- "7. Now listens, if perchance its ear  
The shepherd's well known voice may hear,  
Now, as the tempests round it blow,  
In plaintive accents vents its woe.
- "8. Great Ruler of this earthly ball,  
Do thou my erring steps recall;  
O! seek Thou him who Thee has sought,  
Nor turns from thy decrees his thought."

all evil, he shall *keep* thy soul. The Lord shall *keep* thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore." In Psalm cxxii. the characteristic words are, *Jerusalem, peace* (Hebrew, *salem*), *prosper*, and *prosperity*, which two are nearly the same words as the preceding, with several others of similar sound throughout the Psalm, forming altogether a remarkable paronomasia, or play upon words, which is lost in a translation. In Psalm cxxiii. the characteristic word is *eyes*; in Psalm cxxvi. *turn* and *captivity*, which, in the Hebrew, are nearly the same; in Psalm cxxxiii. *descend* (the same word in the Hebrew being rendered *ran down, went down, and descended*); and in Psalm cxxxiv. *bless*, which occurs in every verse. Psalm cxxiv. exemplifies the carrying on of the sentiment from verse to verse, but without the repetition of any particular word.—See verses 1 and 2, 4 and 5, 6 and 7. These characteristics, however, may be found occasionally in other Psalms, and in some of these they are exhibited but slightly; so that this does not seem to afford a satisfactory explanation of the title, nor does the more general sense of *excellence*, which some have attributed to it; for excellent as these Psalms undoubtedly are, they are not unrivalled by many others. 2nd.—*As to the mode of using them.* Some of the Jewish writers assert that they were sung in ascending fifteen steps of the temple; but whether those steps were at the entrance, or between one court and another, they are not agreed, and their existence appears to be a mere fable, invented to account for the title. Some have supposed it to indicate that the Psalms were to be sung on an elevated place, or with a loud voice in grand chorus, as the word occurs in 2 Chron xx. 19, where the Levites are said to have "stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice on high;" but why these particular Psalms should have been so used does not appear, and the signification of a musical note, or instrument, which others have assigned, is not supported by any known sense of the word, nor marked, as in other titles, by the preceding preposition, *upon*, with the inscription, *to the chief musician*. 3rd.—*The occasion for which they were designed.* One conjecture, which belongs both to this and the previous head, is, that they were recited by the Levites on the raised platform mentioned in Neh. ix. 4, which is denoted by the same Hebrew word rendered by our translators, *stairs, or scaffold*; but what they uttered on that occasion consisted of a confession, prayer, and solemn covenant, of which Nehemiah records the express words, without the least intimation of any Psalms in addition. The word in question, or the root from which it is derived, is applied, in various passages, to the bringing of the ark to Zion, to the returning of the people from Babylon, and to the more ordinary occasions of going up to the tabernacle, or temple, to worship, in which latter sense it occurs in one of the Psalms themselves (cxxii. 4); and the title, is, by the majority of commentators, supposed to intimate, either, that these Psalms, with the exception, perhaps, of one or two subsequently added in commemoration of the event, were sung by the Jews on their journey from Babylon, or that they were customarily used by the people going up in travelling companies to celebrate the periodical feasts. Had the former been intended, the word would most probably have been in the singular, and, perhaps, with the additional words, *from Babylon*, as in Ezra vii. 9 (see marginal rendering), for, though the return was accomplished in two detachments, it is usually spoken of as one event; nor does it seem very probable that the liberated captives would be prepared with a selection of

particular Psalms for the occasion, and still less so that the two companies, who went up at different times, and quite independently of each other (see Ezra i., ii. and vii., viii.), should both have had the same. The plural form of the word, with the article prefixed, *The Ascents*, seems to point rather to the stated journeyings to Jerusalem, when the travellers would naturally beguile their fatigues and cheer their way by reciting Psalms; some having direct reference to the object of their journey, or the sacred scenes to which their steps were directed, and others expressive of their various national and individual feelings, but adapted by their brevity and popular character, to be used as pilgrim songs. Of the fifteen Psalms, nine make mention of Zion, Jerusalem, or the house of the Lord. The series commences with one expressive of the pain of alienation, and of dwelling among slanderous enemies. The next (Psalm cxxi.), which treats of the preserving care of God, opens with an allusion, probably, to the mountains of Jerusalem; and the succeeding one speaks of the joyful going up of the tribes to give thanks unto the name of the Lord, and to pray for the prosperity of Jerusalem. Psalms cxxiv., cxxv., cxxvi., and cxxix., commemorate national mercies, protection, and deliverance, and Psalm cxxxii. refers to the establishment of the Divine worship in Zion. These are interspersed with several of a more miscellaneous and individual character. Psalm cxxxiii., which follows, treats, in the most exquisite strain, of harmony among brethren, comparing it "to the dew which fertilized alike the most distant hills in the land, Hermon and Zion."—*Jebb*. Psalm cxxxiv. concludes the series with a trilogy of blessings. In accordance with the view here taken, the collection is appropriately styled by Hengstenberg, "The Pilgrim Book." The Christian fathers, making an allegorical or spiritual application of the title, regard these Psalms, says Calmet, "as so many steps leading us to virtue and eternity. They find in them excellent lessons of morality, and models of the feelings of a pious soul in every condition in life. Whether overwhelmed with sorrow or vexation, groaning under the weight of this earthly body, or sighing for its happy land; whether penetrated with joy, and with gratitude for the favours received from God, or burning with zeal for the glory of the Lord, and the beauty of His house, it may draw from hence expressions adapted to all its states, and ample materials for devotion."

### PSALM CXX.

A Song of degrees.

Hengstenberg, who assumes that all the anonymous Psalms of Degrees were written after the Captivity, refers this Psalm to the attempts of the Samaritans, by slanderous accusations against the Jews, to hinder their rebuilding of the temple; but, however applicable some parts of it may be to those circumstances, it appears, as a whole, more appropriate to those of David, when the calumnies of Doeg and others forced him to flee his country.

- 1 IN my distress I cried unto the LORD;  
And he heard me.
- 2 Deliver my soul, O LORD,  
From lying lips, *and* from a deceitful tongue.

- 8 What shall be given unto thee ?  
 Or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue ?  
 4 Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.  
 5 Woe is me, that I sojourn in Meshech,  
 That I dwell in the tents of Kedar !  
 6 My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace.  
 7 I am for peace : but when I speak, they are for war.

PSALM CXXI.

A Song of degrees.

On this Psalm, see preceding remarks. The Hebrew of this title slightly differs from the rest, and may be rendered, *A Song for the Ascents*, perhaps importing that this Psalm was composed for those occasions. It would be appropriate either on setting out, or on coming in sight of the mountains of Jerusalem.

PSALM CXX. 3, 4. These verses may be rendered : *What shall the deceitful tongue give unto thee ? Or what shall it profit thee ? It is as the sharp arrows of the mighty man, with coals of juniper*, taking the latter as a description of the deceitful tongue ; but the comparison with *sharp arrows of the mighty*, or of a warrior, seems, as remarked by Hengstenberg, "too noble a one for slander ;" and it forms a more direct and appropriate answer to the preceding question, when understood as the punishment to be inflicted on the false tongue. *Coals of juniper*. "The glowing embers of broom."—Boothroyd. Whether the juniper, or a species of broom, is intended, is uncertain ; but the Psalmist, no doubt, alludes to some kind of wood capable of emitting intense heat, or retaining it for a long time. Jerome states that the juniper was said to be so retentive of heat, that its ashes, if covered up, would keep on fire for a year, and an ancient Hebrew commentary on the Psalms, relates a tradition of two men who had cooked their food with a juniper fire in the wilderness, and on coming to the same spot twelve months afterwards, found sufficient heat still in the ashes to warm their feet. Phillips, who considers the Psalmist refers to arrows made of this wood, remarks : "Without giving implicit credence to these statements, we may, at least, infer that there exists in the juniper the property mentioned, in a very high degree, and that it must have been the best of all wood of which to make the fiery arrows so much employed in ancient times as weapons of warfare."

5. "Meshech was the son of Japheth, from whom, apparently, the Moschi descended, who inhabited the mountains bordering upon Colchis, Iberia, and Armenia, and who afterwards peopled Russia ; and the posterity of Kedar, son of Abraham, dwelt in the south of Arabia Deserta. Probably the Psalmist simply means that the people among whom he lived appeared to be as fierce and barbarous as these wandering tribes."—B.C.B.

- 1 I WILL lift up mine eyes unto the hills,  
From whence cometh my help.
- 2 My help cometh from the LORD,  
Which made heaven and earth.
- 3 He will not suffer thy foot to be moved:  
He that keepeth thee will not slumber.
- 4 Behold, he that keepeth Israel  
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.
- 5 The LORD is thy keeper:  
The LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand.

PSALM cxxi. 1. The second clause is, by some, taken interrogatively: *From whence cometh my help?* (the Hebrew particle occurring no where else in a relative sense), and by others, the first also: *Shall I lift up mine eyes unto the hills?* supposing the Psalmist to allude to the hills as the scenes of idolatrous worship (see Dent. xii. 2), and giving this and the next verse the sense expressed in the paraphrase of J. G. Bevan:—

“To hills and mountains shall I look,

From them expecting aid?

No! From the Lord assistance comes,

Who earth, who heaven, hath made”—

and forming a parallel passage with Jer. iii. 23. The affirmative rendering of the first clause seems, however, preferable, or at least, more in accordance with the view here taken of this series of Psalms: *the hills*, as in Psalm cxxv. 1, 2, denoting those about Jerusalem, especially Zion, “the mountain of the Lord’s house,” towards which the Israelites, when engaged in prayer, were wont to look (see 1 Kings viii. 33, 35, 38), however distantly separated, as did the prophet Daniel in Babylon, in remembrance of its past, and hope of its future glory.—Compare Psalm iii. 4.

3. A change of person takes place here, the remaining verses forming a response to the two preceding.

5, 6. Though these verses may be understood, in a general sense, as importing the Divine protection, both by *day* and *night*, the *sun* and *moon* being mentioned in accordance with Gen. i. 16, as the presiding luminary of each season, yet the terms employed have a peculiar force and significance in reference to Eastern and tropical regions, compared with our more temperate climates, where the value and importance of a *shade* can scarcely be fully appreciated. In a district near Benares, upwards of 100 persons are said to have died in one season, *sun smitten*; the *coup de soleil* producing, in many cases, speedy or instantaneous death, and in others, paralysis or idiocy, for the remainder of life. Various effects have been attributed in different ages and countries to the influence of the moon. One of these is

- 6 The sun shall not smite thee by day,  
Nor the moon by night.
- 7 The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil:  
He shall preserve thy soul.
- 8 The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in,  
From this time forth, and even for evermore.

PSALM CXXII.

A Song of degrees of David.

The inscription to David in the title is omitted in most of the old versions, and the Psalm has been alleged to afford internal evidences against its Davidic origin. 1st—That the abbreviated form of the relative pronoun, which occurs in the Hebrew of verses 3 and 4, belongs to a later age: 2nd—That verse 3 appears to allude to the *re*-building of Jerusalem after the Captivity: 3rd—That the mention of *the house of David* (verse 5) points to

indicated by the word *lunatic*, which, corresponding in its etymology with the Greek term employed by the New Testament writers, shows the opinion entertained by their countrymen as to one cause at least of mental derangement. The moon was regarded by some of the ancients as the source of cold and of dew, and also as having an influence on the affairs and destinies of men; and a notion is very prevalent in the East, and in the south of Europe, of its injurious effects upon the human constitution, and on dead animal substances, which, setting aside everything of an imaginary or astrological character, seems not destitute of foundation in physical facts. Fish is said to acquire so deleterious a quality from exposure to her beams, as to become unfit for food, and their effects upon the person are attested by travellers of credibility. The following extract is from *Came's Letters from the East*, (1826, Vol. I. p. 88): "The effect of moonlight on the eyes in this country (Egypt) is singularly injurious; the natives tell you, as I found afterwards they also did in Arabia, always to cover your eyes when you sleep in the open air." It is rather strange that passage in the Psalms should not have been thus illustrated, as the allusion seems direct. The moon here really strikes, and affects the sight, when you sleep exposed to it, much more than the sun, a fact of which I had a very unpleasant proof one night, and took care to guard against it afterwards. Indeed, the sight of a person who should sleep with his face exposed at night would soon be utterly impaired or destroyed." See further in *Burder's Oriental Literature*, *Roberts's Oriental Illustrations*, and *Kitto's Illustrated Commentary*.

. 8. *Thy going out and thy coming in*. This is a frequent Scripture expression for the whole course of life in all situations and conditions; but the present as well as the preceding verses, may have especial reference to the circumstances of the pilgrims on their journeys.



the times of his posterity: 4th—That verse 2 is not applicable to David, but only to those who approached the city from without: and 5th—That the pilgrimages, so distinctly alluded to in verse 4, did not, in all probability, become general till a later period. These objections, however, do not seem to have much weight. As to the 1st, the abbreviated form of the pronoun occurs in poetry much older than the age of David, viz., the Song of Deborah, and the book of Job; and it abounds in Ecclesiastes and Canticles, the compositions of his son and successor, Solomon. 2nd—The description of Jerusalem is quite as appropriate to the condition to which it was raised by David, as to its restoration after the Chaldean destruction. 3rd—David was the founder of a new royal house or dynasty, and the phrase, *the house of David*, is used in reference to his own times (2 Sam. iii. 1), in contradistinction to “the house of Saul,” and by himself in commemorating the Lord’s gracious promise respecting its glory and perpetuity, as well as in the promise itself—2 Sam. vii. 16, 19. 4th—“This objection is set aside by the remark, that David here, as he frequently did, sang from the soul of the people.”—*Hengstenberg*. 5th—“The assertion that pilgrimages to Jerusalem did not come into general use till some time after the reign of David, when uniformity of public worship had been completely established, depends upon the idea, which is not at all borne out by history, that the directions in the Pentateuch, as to there being only one sanctuary, were not observed till a later age.”—*Hengstenberg*. An instance in point is recorded of the parents of Samuel, who went up yearly to worship, while the ark was in Shiloh (1 Sam. i. 8); and when it was placed in the tabernacle of Zion, such journeys were no doubt directed thither. That this had become an established practice is proved by the fear which pervaded the heart of Jeroboam, and induced him to set up the idolatrous calves in Bethel and Dan, lest the people, by going up to sacrifice at Jerusalem, should be induced to return to their legitimate sovereign—1 Kings xii. 26, 27. It may be added, that the expression, *house of the Lord*, for the tabernacle, before the erection of the temple, frequently occurs in the Psalms of David, as in verses 1 and 9 of the present. This Psalm discloses a nearer view of Jerusalem than the preceding, and might be appropriately recited on approaching, or having entered the gates, as verse 2 may be more correctly rendered, *Our feet are standing, &c.*

- 1 I WAS glad when they said unto me,  
Let us go into the house of the LORD.
- 2 Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.
- 3 Jerusalem is builded as a city  
That is compact together :

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PSALM CXXII. 1. *I was glad when they said unto me; or more literally, as rendered by Boothroyd: “I rejoiced with those who said unto me,” &c.*

2. This verse is thus paraphrased by Mendelssohn: “For already our feet have been standing at the gate of Jerusalem; and we have rejoiced at the perfection of its beauty.”

3. *Jerusalem is builded; literally, Jerusalem, the builded, i.e., which is*

- 4 Whither the tribes go up,  
The tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel,  
To give thanks unto the name of the LORD.
- 5 For there are set thrones of judgment,  
The thrones of the house of David.
- 6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem :  
They shall prosper that love thee.
- 7 Peace be within thy walls,  
And prosperity within thy palaces.
- 8 For my brethren and companions' sakes,  
I will now say, Peace be within thee.

*builded, &c.*; these words standing in opposition with the preceding: *Our feet are standing within thy gates, O Jerusalem,—Jerusalem which is builded as a city that is compact together.* “The city is composed of buildings which are uniform and consistent with one another, so that there is exhibited to the eye of the beholder, a perfect harmony in all its parts, as well as continuity.”—*Phillips*. “The seat of Jerusalem was upon a very unequal ground; the low town was mean and dismantled, the castle on the hill was fortified and held as a place of strength; which, being taken by Joab, David built up the whole, and so made it one city, associated and joined together.—See 1 Chron. xi. 7, 8.”—*Hammond*. Several of the old translators refer the words to the people, “a city whose fellowship is complete;” and perhaps the Psalmist may here have had both ideas in view.

4. “From the external splendour of Jerusalem, the Psalmist proceeds to its internal glory; he praises its rank as that of the religious metropolis of the nation, the centre of the congregation of God.”—*Hengstenberg*. *The testimony of Israel*, according to our version, would denote the sanctuary, which is frequently termed the Tabernacle of Testimony, but there is nothing in the Hebrew answering to *unto*, and the literal rendering is, *a testimony for Israel*; signifying probably, according to the precept to Israel, requiring the males to appear three times in the year before the Lord.—Ex. xxiii. 17, xxxiv. 23; Deut. xvi. 16.

5. *Thrones of judgment*; not only the royal throne, but the seats or benches of justice, which, however, belonged to *the house of David*, under whose auspices all judicial sentences were pronounced.

6. *They shall prosper*; rather, *let them, or may they, prosper, that love thee*.

8, 9. “In these verses intercession for Israel is traced up to its source; it flows from the love of the brethren and of God. For the well-being of the whole nation depended upon *her* well-being, and in *her* is the house of God.”—*Hengstenberg*. *Peace* is here used in the general sense of *welfare*, which

9 Because of the house of the Lord our God  
I will seek thy good.

PSALM CXXIII.

A Song of degrees.

Some refer this Psalm to the malice and hostility shown by the Samaritans towards the Jews after their return from Babylon; but its date and occasion are altogether a matter of conjecture. The commencement is very similar to that of Psalm cxxi.

1 UNTO thee lift I up mine eyes,  
O thou that dwellest in the heavens.  
2 Behold, as the eyes of servants  
Look unto the hand of their masters,  
And as the eyes of a maiden  
Unto the hand of her mistress;

the original word *salem* has, in the ordinary salutation in the East. Of the alliterations in the Hebrew of this Psalm, noticed on page 417, the following, transcript of verses 6 and 7 in English letters may afford a specimen:—

*Shaaloo shelom Yerooshalaim, yishlaico ohavayikh.*

*Yehi shalom bechailaikh, shalvah bearmenothayikh.*

It is related that Theodore Zuinger took his leave of the world in a Latin paraphrase of this Psalm, which he had himself composed. It may be found in Bishop Horne's Commentary, together with an English version of it by Merrick, which "may serve," he remarks, "as a finished specimen of the noble and exalted use which a Christian may and ought to make of the Psalms of David."

PSALM cxxiii. 2. Without setting aside the more general application of this verse as "expressive of a readiness to obey the commands of God when known, and also as the language of dependence, expecting support, protection, and redress" (*B.C.B.*), the direct purport of it appears to be as explained by Harmer: "As a slave, ordered by a master or mistress to be chastised for a fault, turns his or her imploring eyes to that superior, till that motion of the hand appears which puts an end to the bitterness that is felt, so our eyes are upon thee, our God, till thy hand shall give the signal for putting an end to our sorrows." It is customary in the East to convey orders to attendants or officers by slight motions of the hands or fingers, well understood by them, but scarcely noticeable by strangers. A despot has been known to command in this way, while in company, the decapitation of scores of persons. For further illustration, see *Kitto's Illustrated Commentary*, *Burder's Oriental Customs*, and *Roberts's Oriental Illustrations*.

- So our eyes *wait* upon the LORD our God,  
 Until that he have mercy upon us.
- 8 Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us :  
 For we are exceedingly filled with contempt.
- 4 Our soul is exceedingly filled  
 With the scorning of those that are at ease,  
*And* with the contempt of the proud.

PSALM CXXIV.

A Song of degrees of David.

"It is uncertain what the particular deliverance was which is celebrated in this Psalm. It is attributed to David in the present copies of the Hebrew text ; but *Iedawid, of David*, is wanting in three MSS., and in the old versions. Some refer it to the deliverance of Hezekiah from Sennacherib, and others to the return from the Babylonish captivity, while Dr. A. Clarke refers it to that of the Jews from the massacre intended by Haman."—*B.C.B.*

- 1 IF *it had not been* the LORD who was on our side,  
 Now may Israel say ;
- 2 If *it had not been* the LORD who was on our side,  
 When men rose up against us :
- 8 Then they had swallowed us up quick,  
 When their wrath was kindled against us :
- 4 Then the waters had overwhelmed us,  
 The stream had gone over our soul :

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PSALM cxxiv. 3. *Then they had swallowed us up quick ; i.e., alive.* See on Psalm lv. 15. Hengstenberg supposes the Psalmist to allude to the destruction of Korah and his company, who were swallowed up alive by the earth ; but the reference is rather to the habits of animals of prey, which seize and devour their victims alive. This is evident from the subjoined words, *when their wrath was kindled against us*, and from the recurrence to the comparison, in verse 6, *Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth*. The deliverance is described (verses 3-7) under three metaphors : escape from the teeth of ferocious animals, from drowning in the waters, and that of a bird from the snare of the fowler, which is a familiar comparison in the East. "A man who has narrowly escaped danger says, 'My life is like that of the bird, which has escaped from the snare.' The life of man is often compared to that of a bird. Thus, of him whose spirit has departed, it is said : 'Ah ! the bird has left its nest, it has gone away.' As the unhatched bird must first burst from the shell before it can fly, so must this soul burst from its body."—*Roberts's Oriental Illustrations.*

- 5 Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.  
 6 Blessed *be* the LORD  
 Who hath not given us *as* a prey to their teeth.  
 7 Our soul is escaped as a bird  
 Out of the snare of the fowlers :  
 The snare is broken, and we are escaped.  
 8 Our help *is* in the name of the LORD,  
 Who made heaven and earth.

## PSALM CXXV.

A Song of degrees.

"Dr. Delaney supposes this Psalm to have been composed by David, when about to attack the strongholds of Zion; others refer it to the invasion of Judah by Sennacherib, and the miraculous deliverance of Jerusalem; but it most probably was written on the return from the Captivity."—*B.C.B.* "The protecting grace of God over His own people is illustrated by two images, drawn from the natural situation of the metropolis of the Church; the people of the Lord is firm, like Mount Zion—is surrounded by the protection of the Lord, as Jerusalem is surrounded by mountains." The Psalmist "compares the firmness of the Church itself to that of her external seat; the immoveableness of the spiritual to that of the material Zion." These "two figures impress a high sacredness upon the view of Zion and Jerusalem, as obtained by the pilgrims, and are intended to open up to them the symbolical import of natural objects."—*Hengstenberg*.

- 1 THEY that trust in the LORD  
*Shall be* as mount Zion,  
*Which* cannot be removed, *but* abideth for ever.  
 2 *As* the mountains *are* round about Jerusalem,  
 So the LORD *is* round about his people  
 From henceforth even for ever.

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PSALM CXXV. 2. "'Jerusalem,' says Sandys 'is seated on a rocky mountain, every way to be ascended, except a little on the north, with steep ascents and deep valleys naturally fortified. For the most part it is environed with other mountains, not far removed, as if placed in the midst of an amphitheatre.'"—*B.C.B.* To this description may be added that of a recent traveller, Robinson: "The sacred city lies upon the broad and high mountain range which is shut in by the two valleys, Jehoshaphat and Hinnom. All the surrounding hills are higher; in the east, the Mount of Olives; on the south, the so-called Hill of Evil Counsel, which ascends from the valley of Hinnom. On the west, the ground rises gently to the border of the great

- 3 For the rod of the wicked  
Shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous ;  
Lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.
- 4 Do good, O LORD, unto *those that be good*,  
And to *them that are* upright in their hearts.
- 5 As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways,  
The LORD shall lead them forth  
With the workers of iniquity :  
*But peace shall be upon Israel.*

PSALM CXXVI.

A Song of degrees.

"This Psalm evidently appears to have been composed in consequence of the proclamation of Cyrus in favour of the Jews, giving them leave to return to their own land, and rebuild their city and temple."—B.C.B.

- 1 WHEN the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion,  
We were like them that dream.

Wady, as described above ; while, in the north, the bend of a ridge which adjoins the Mount of Olives, limits the view to the distance of about a mile-and-a-half."

3. *The rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot, or possession, of the righteous ; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.* "That is, the sceptre or power of the wicked shall not always rule over or oppress God's people ; lest they should be overcome by their sufferings, and apostatize from God."—Boothroyd.

4, 5. "The conduct in conformity with the rule as it was laid down to Israel in the Divine law, is here represented as necessary, in reference, not only to outward actions, but also to the heart." "The good and the upright in heart are named *Israel*, as, in Psalm lxxiii. 1, Israel is identified with the pure in heart." "The Israel are the pure gold which remains after the removal of the dross." But *such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity.* "They have associated themselves in conduct with evil doers ; God, therefore, will associate them in punishment with them, in spite of their freedom from external idolatry, and their external religion."—Hengstenberg. Compare, as to mode of expression, Psalms xxvi. 9, and note, xxviii. 3.

PSALM CXXVI. 1. *When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion.* The Hebrew for *turn* and *captivity*, as remarked on page 417, is nearly the same. This clause reads, *Beshoob Yehovah ethshibath Twion ;* literally, *When Jehovah*

- 2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter,  
 And our tongue with singing :  
 Then said they among the heathen,  
 The LORD hath done great things for them.  
 8 The LORD hath done great things for us ;  
 Whereof we are glad.  
 4 Turn again our captivity, O LORD,  
 As the streams in the south.  
 5 They that sow in tears  
 Shall reap in joy.  
 6 He that goeth forth and weepeth,

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*returned the returning of Zion ; or it may be only an orthographical variation of the word for captivity, which appears in its usual form in verse 4 : Shoobah, Jehovah, ethshebeethainoo ; Turn back, O Jehovah, our captivity.*

2. *Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing.* "See that happy man, his mouth is always full of laughter, his tongue is always singing."—*Roberts's Oriental Illustrations.*

4. "Restore our captivity, O Jehovah, as thou restorest the torrents of the South."—*Boothroyd.* "As those southern torrents, which, dried up by the heat of summer, are restored by the rains of autumn."—*B.C.B.* This may be a prayer for the return of those who still remained in Babylon, supposing the Psalm to have been composed before the return was complete ; or it may be understood in the more general sense of a full restoration to prosperity, as when the Lord is said to have "turned the captivity of Job."—*Job xlii. 10.* See on Psalm liii. 6.

5, 6. *Precious seed ; marginal, seed basket.* The word *precious*, here introduced by our own and some other modern translators, is not justified by any of the old versions, or the usage of the Hebrew word, which is from the root to *draw*, and appears to signify simply the draught of seed, that portion of the corn which is drawn from the store to be scattered by the hand of the sower. Various illustrations, more or less apposite, have been adduced as respects the literal reference of these two verses. They have been supposed to allude, either in a general sense, to the discouraging circumstances, from the state of the weather, or the soil, or the condition of the seed, which may attend the period of sowing ; or, more particularly, to the case of a poor husbandman, whose present exigencies will hardly admit of withdrawing from his heap, a few handfuls as the germ of a future crop ; or to the dangers attending agricultural labours in districts exposed to the incursions of hostile or predatory neighbours, as the wandering herdmen, who neither sow nor reap themselves, but obtain the corn they need by depredations upon the

Bearing precious seed,  
Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing,  
Bringing his sheaves *with him*.

PSALM CXXVII.

A Song of degrees for [or, of] Solomon.

Some suppose this Psalm was written by David for his son, either shortly before his death, or on his receiving the announcement that Solomon should build a house for the Lord; but there seems no valid reason for not taking the particle in the usual sense, as indicating the author. The characteristic word of this Psalm is *vain*, and its principal topic is the vanity of all human efforts without the Divine blessing. The sentiments are very similar to those inculcated by Solomon in the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes; see particularly Prov. x. 22, and the early chapters of Ecclesiastes, where *vanity* is not less a characteristic

cultivators of the soil. Such may have been the case in the unsettled state of Judea when the captives returned; and it is so described by travellers at the present time, who represent the peasants as going armed to their work. This, however, would be more appropriate to the time of harvest, when, on the contrary, the Psalmist speaks of the husbandman as *bringing his sheaves rejoicing*. Perhaps the expressions may simply imply that the seed requires to be well watered to produce a plenteous crop. "It is proverbial," remarks Roberts, "to say to a boy who weeps because he cannot easily acquire his lesson, 'My child, the plants of science require the water of the eyes. If you sow with tears, the profit will appear in your own hands.' The Jews in their captivity had been sowing good seed, had watered it with their tears, and the time was now come for them to reap with joy, and to return with their sheaves rejoicing." After their return, however, the re-establishment of their civil and ecclesiastical polity was commenced in tears, for the rejoicing on laying the foundation of the temple, was mingled with the weeping of those who remembered the glory of the former house, and the work was long retarded by the vexatious hostilities of the Samaritans; but, at length, according to the prediction of Zechariah (iv. 6, 7), that the head-stone should be brought forth with shouting, it was brought to a happy completion, and the dedication of the house was kept with joy—Ezra vi. 16. So also the dedication of the walls of the city, the rebuilding of which had been delayed by like hindrances, was kept "with gladness and thanksgivings," and the people "offered great sacrifices and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy"—Neh. xii. 27, 43. Whatever may have been the particular circumstances alluded to by the Psalmist, his words are applicable to any good and well-directed undertaking, which, though commenced amid sorrow or discouragement, may, through the Divine blessing, be crowned with a joyful result,



word. Hengstenberg, though perhaps with more of fancy than truth, recognizes in the words, *he giveth his beloved sleep*, an allusion to the personal relations of Solomon, who received the name of *Jedidiah, beloved of the Lord*, and to whom the promise of the Divine blessing was given when in sleep. —1 Kings iii. 5–15. Whosoever the Psalm may have been composed, it is very appropriately inserted in a collection, formed probably while the Jews were engaged in the re-establishment of their civil and ecclesiastical polity.

- 1 EXCEPT the LORD build the house,  
They labour in vain that build it :  
Except the LORD keep the city,  
The watchman waketh *but* in vain.
- 2 *It is vain* for you to rise up early,  
To sit up late,  
To eat the bread of sorrows :  
*For* so he giveth his beloved sleep.
- 8 Lo, children *are* an heritage of the LORD :  
*And* the fruit of the womb *is* his reward.
- 4 As arrows *are* in the hand of a mighty man :  
So *are* children of the youth.

PSALM cxxvii. 1. *Except the Lord build the house.* Some understand the house of the Lord, but the Hebrew is without the article, and should rather be taken in a general sense, this clause, referring especially to individual and family concerns, as the next does to those of the community.

2. *To sit up late.* Our translators, in inserting this familiar English phrase, give the purport, but reverse the expression of the original, which signifies, *resting from toil*, not abstaining from rest—to rest, or go to rest, late. *To eat the bread of sorrows*, or *toils*; bread acquired by much labour and anxiety. This verse teaches us that “all human toil and anxiety are unavailing without God’s assistance; and more successful are they, even in their worldly concerns, who, trusting to the Divine blessing, do their appointed work in faith, and take the gifts of natural repose which He allows to them, than those, who, in their over carefulness, take so much thought for the morrow, and deny themselves necessary rest.”—*Jebb*. See Matt. vi. 34, &c.

3. “The *Lo*, points to a new and particularly striking example of the principle that all depends on the Lord’s blessing. The expression *reward*, or *hire*, is taken from Gen. xxx. 18, where Leah, in the birth of a son, sees a reward granted to her by God, and in consequence bestows on him the name of Issachar. In verses 4 and 5 the Psalmist points to the greatness of this Divine gift, the worth of a blooming posterity.”—*Hengstenberg*.

4. *Children of the youth*; literally, *sons of youth*; which may be merely a Hebraism for *youth*, or *youthful sons*, as *sons of the stranger*, *sons of the needy*,

- 5 Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them :  
They shall not be ashamed,  
But they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.

PSALM CXXVIII.

A Song of degrees.

"This Psalm," remarks Dimock, "is naturally connected with the preceding, and is a most beautiful epithalamium," or nuptial benediction. The characteristic word is *bless* (verses 1, 4, 5), and its theme, the blessedness of the man who feareth the Lord.

- 1 BLESSED is every one that feareth the LORD ;  
That walketh in his ways.  
2 For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands :  
Happy shalt thou be,  
And it shall be well with thee.

for *strangers*, and *poor* (Psalm xviii. 44; Isa. lxii. 8; Psalm lxxii. 4); or may denote sons born of young parents, as Joseph, on the contrary, is called, *the son of Jacob's old age* (Gen. xxxvii. 3); and *a wife of youth* (Isa. liv. 6) probably signifies one married when both parties were young. Such children, it is remarked, "are peculiarly strong, and come to the height of their vigour when the declining parents need their protection."—*Hengstenberg*. The Orientals are accustomed to speak of sons as the *arrows* of their fathers. "To sharpen arrows, to make sharp arrows, is, among them, to get brave and valiant sons. When a son is born in a family, it is customary to hang up bows and arrows before the house as a sign that the family has acquired a defender."—*Burder's Oriental Customs*. "To have a numerous male progeny is considered a great advantage, and people are afraid of offending such a family, lest the arrows should be sent at them. 'What a fine fellow is the son of Kardan! he is like an arrow in the hand of a hero.'"—*Roberts*.

5. *They shall not be ashamed, or put to shame, but they shall speak with* (marginal *subdue, or destroy*) *the enemies in the gate*. The textual rendering is supported by the usage of the Hebrew verb. Some understand the passage as referring to forensic disputes, judicial proceedings being usually carried on at the gate of the city; but it may mean simply the entrance to the house, where the assaults of an enemy were to be resisted.

PSALM CXXVIII. 2. "The first member carries an allusion to Deut. xxviii. 33 (compare Lev. xxvi. 16), where it is threatened to the covenant-breaking Israel, that enemies should eat up the fruit of their land, and all their labour."—*Hengstenberg*.

- 3 Thy wife *shall be* as a fruitful vine  
By the sides of thine house :  
Thy children like olive plants  
Round about thy table.
- 4 Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed  
That feareth the LORD.
- 5 The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion :  
And thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem  
All the days of thy life.
- 6 Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children,  
And peace upon Israel.

## PSALM CXXIX.

A Song of degrees.

Whether this Psalm was written in consequence of the opposition of the Samaritans or not, it was in all probability composed after the Captivity. It alludes to the many afflictions which Israel had endured from his *youth*, that is from the earliest period of national existence, which commenced under Egyptian bondage; and commemorates the Lord's preservation through all, concluding with a denunciation of the enemies of Zion.

- 1 MANY a time have they afflicted me from my youth,  
May Israel now say :
- 2 Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth :  
Yet they have not prevailed against me.

3. Dr. Kitto remarks, " We do not remember to have met with a single instance in the East of vines trained against the walls of a house, or of olives near or about one. The passage doubtless derives its figures from the fertility of the vine, and the appearance of the olive, or the order in which the trees are planted. The construction would then be: *Thy wife in the sides* (interior apartments) *of thy house shall be as the fruitful vine*; and *thy children round about thy table like olive plants*." The practice of growing vines and other climbing plants about houses in the East, as well as in our own and other countries, is, however, attested by other travellers, and is in all probability alluded to by the Psalmist, though the words *by the sides* may signify either *about*, or *in the interior*, of the house, as in Jonah i. 5, "the sides of the ship" denote the inside or cabin, and may therefore apply either to the vine or to the wife; and *round about thy table*, in the next line, must be referred to the children, not to the olive plants.

- 3 The plowers plowed upon my back :  
They made long their furrows.
- 4 The LORD is righteous :  
He hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.
- 5 Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate  
Zion.
- 6 Let them be as the grass *upon* the housetops,  
Which withereth afore it groweth up :
- 7 Wherewith the mower filleth not his hand ;  
Nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom.
- 8 Neither do they which go by say,  
The blessing of the LORD *be* upon you :  
We bless you in the name of the LORD.

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PSALM CXXIX. 3. Whether the Israelites as a nation were ever subjected to the indignity which the literal application of this verse indicates does not appear from their history; but the words may be understood, in a more general sense, of the infliction of cruelty and oppression. "When a man is in much trouble through oppression," remarks Roberts, "he says, 'How they plough me and turn me up. All are now ploughing me. Alas! alas! my enemies, nay my children are now ploughing me.'"

4. *The cords of the wicked*; i.e., the cords with which they bound us.

6. "As the tops of the houses in the East are flat, they are frequently grown over with grass, or other vegetable productions; but, from the want of proper nourishment, it is but small and weak, and, from its elevation, being exposed to the scorching sun, it is soon withered."—*B.C.B.* *Grass*, as appears from the next verse, is here used in its general sense, for grass or corn. *Which withereth afore it groweth up*; or, as it is more generally and perhaps more correctly rendered, *before it is plucked up, or gathered*. The import is the same either way—before it comes to maturity. So let the enemies of Zion be defeated before their designs are accomplished.

7. *Nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom*; i.e., the bag or pocket formed by the loose dress of the Orientals above the girdle.—See on Psalm lxxix. 12.

8. This verse contains two formulas of salutation with which it was customary for passers-by to greet the reapers; or, according to the Syriac version, the salutation and response, as we find in the narrative of Ruth (ii. 4), that "Boaz said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you; and they answered him, The Lord bless thee."

## PSALM CXXX.

A Song of degrees.

This Psalm is one of fervent supplication, expressive of deep distress and penitential feeling, either of an individual or national character. In the former case, the last two verses may be regarded as an invitation to others, founded on the Psalmist's experience of the Divine mercy; in the latter, which is the view more generally adopted, the first six verses are spoken by each member of the Church, or by one on behalf of the whole, and the seventh and eighth form a general and concluding chorus. Some suppose it to have been composed, or at least to have formed part of the service, on the penitential occasion described in Ezra ix. and x.

- 1 OUT of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD.
- 2 LORD, hear my voice :  
Let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.
- 3 If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities,  
O LORD, who shall stand ?
- 4 But *there is forgiveness with thee,*  
That thou mayest be feared.
- 5 I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait,  
And in his word do I hope.
- 6 My soul *waiteth* for the LORD,  
More than they that watch for the morning :  
*I say more than they that watch for the morning.*

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PSALM CXXX. 3. *If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities ; " mark down, i.e., for the purpose of punishing."*—Boothroyd. "If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it?"—*Prayer Book Version.*

4. *But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.* "The sense is that men may preserve a sense of religion, which else, through despair, they would cast off."—Boothroyd. The old versions read the latter clause variously: Septuagint and others, "for thy name's sake;" Vulgate, connecting it with the next verse, "For thy law I have waited for thee, O Lord."

6. "The Psalmist," remarks Phillips, "says that his soul longs for the Lord more earnestly than the watchers of the morning long for the day, when the time of watching will expire, and they, wearied with duty, will be enabled to enjoy rest and repose. Allusion is here made to the watchings which the priests and Levites exercised during the night, in the temple (see Psalm cxxxiv. 1), especially to those watchers who were daily sent before light to observe carefully the first dawn of the morning, when it would be lawful to offer the morning sacrifice. Agreeably to this is the

- 7 Let Israel hope in the LORD :  
 For with the LORD *there is* mercy,  
 And with him *is* plenteous redemption.  
 8 And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

PSALM CXXXI.

A Song of degrees of David.

The name of David in the title is omitted in several of the old versions, but there is nothing in the contents of the Psalm incompatible with his having been the author. It may have been inserted in the present series as applicable to the circumstances of the Jews when accused by Sanballat of conspiring against the King of Persia.—See Neh. vi.

- 1 LORD, my heart is not haughty,  
 Nor mine eyes lofty :  
 Neither do I exercise myself in great matters,  
 Or in things too high for me.  
 2 Surely I have behaved and quieted myself,  
 As a child that is weaned of his mother :  
 My soul is even as a weaned child.  
 3 Let Israel hope in the LORD  
 From henceforth and for ever.

rendering of the Chaldee, 'My soul waits for the Lord more than the keepers of the morning vigils, which they observe for offering of the morning oblation.'" Most of the old versions read, *My soul waiteth for the Lord from the morning watch till the evening*; the Syriac, "from morning watch to morning watch;" and the Hebrew will admit of the latter rendering. But the common reading and rendering seems preferable, the repetition in the last clause being emphatic; yet it is not improved by the insertion of *I say*. If any thing were needed, *Yea* would read better, but the passage is best without either.

PSALM CXXXI. 2. *Surely I have behaved and quieted myself*. Our word *behaved*, which may be used either in a good or bad sense, is too indefinite to convey the meaning of the Hebrew verb, which is nearly identical with the succeeding one: *Surely I have composed, or humbled, and quieted myself* (literally, *my soul*), as a child that is weaned of his mother. The sense of the verse appears to be: I have abstained from all inordinate desires, or ambitious aims, as a child that has been weaned, forgetting its infantile nutriment, quietly resigns itself to its mother's disposal and continued care.

## PSALM CXXXII.

A Song of degrees.

The opening verses of this Psalm in connection with verses 10-12, appear to refer expressly to the desire of David to build a temple to the Lord, and the consequent promise of the kingdom to his posterity, conveyed through the prophet Nathan.—2 Sam. vii. The manner in which David is spoken of is that of a later pen, rather than a contemporary. Several passages (verses 1, 8-12) are nearly identical with parts of Solomon's prayer on the dedication of the temple (2 Chron. vi. 16, 17, 41, 42); and it is generally considered to have been composed for that occasion, when a reference to the Divine promises to David would be peculiarly appropriate on the part of those who had now carried out his pious designs, invoking the blessing of God on their proceedings, and the fulfilment of those promises to his successors. The Psalm might probably be employed at the dedication of the second temple, which may have led to its insertion in the present series.

1 LORD, remember David,

And all his afflictions :

2 How he swore unto the LORD,

And vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob ;

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PSALM cxxxii. 1. The word *afflictions* is not appropriate to the context, which alludes to David's earnest care and solicitude respecting the public worship of God. The Hebrew root sometimes has the sense of taking pains or trouble for a particular object, which seems to be the idea here intended, as expressed in Boothroyd's version, *his pious labours*; and corresponding with the parallel passage in Solomon's prayer (2 Chron. vi. 42), where a different word is used, and is rendered by our translators *mercies*, but more correctly *pious deeds*.

2-5. The expressions in these verses are not to be construed in a strictly literal sense, for David was dwelling "in a house of cedar" at the time specially referred to, while "the ark of God dwelt within curtains" (2 Sam. vii. 2); but he would not rest satisfied in the enjoyment of his personal comforts or luxuries, regardless of his highest duties. "They are to be explained," remarks Hengstenberg, "from 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30. David dwelt in his house as though he had not dwelt in it." His "earnest desire to have the dwelling of God in his capital, would not allow him to rest till he had accomplished the desired end. Scarcely was this object gained, when the new desire awoke in David's bosom for the erection of a solid temple, with which God was well pleased, though He did not permit its being carried into execution by him personally. As a reward for this sincere care about His house, the Lord granted to David the promise of a return to his own house." *Nor go up into my bed* (verse 8), is ex-

- 3 Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house,  
Nor go up into my bed ;  
4 I will not give sleep to mine eyes,  
Or slumber to mine eyelids,  
5 Until I find out a place for the LORD,  
An habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.  
6 Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah:  
We found it in the fields of the wood.  
7 We will go into his tabernacles :  
We will worship at his footstool.  
8 Arise, O LORD, into thy rest ;  
Thou and the ark of thy strength.

pressed in the Hebrew by two words, *the couch of my bed*, as *the tabernacle of my house*, in the previous clause. To verse 4 some of the old versions make a needless addition, *Nor rest to my temples*. "By the expression *the mighty God of Jacob*, in verses 2 and 5, the Psalmist evidently has reference to the patriarch's own words in his blessing to Joseph (Gen. xlix. 24), where God is emphatically styled 'the mighty God of Jacob.'"—*Phillips*.

6. There is some obscurity in this verse which appears to allude to the places that had been the depositories of the ark before its removal to Jerusalem. *We heard of it at Ephratah*, may signify either, We heard at Ephratah the report of it, or, We heard of its being there. Ephratah or Ephrath is mentioned in several passages as identical with Bethlehem (Gen. xxxv. 19; Ruth iv. 11; Mic. v. 2); but there is no record of the ark having ever been placed there, nor any apparent reason why that place should be particularly mentioned as one where the report of it was heard; for, though David's birthplace, it had ceased to be his residence when the care of the ark of God engaged his anxious thought. It is therefore probable that Ephratah here denotes the district of the tribe of Ephraim, in which Shiloh was situate, where the ark remained from the days of Joshua to those of Eli and Samuel, when it was taken by the Philistines. By *the fields of the wood* is probably meant Kirjath-jearim, where the ark abode for twenty years after it was recovered from the Philistines (1 Sam. vii. 2), and which might be so called from its abounding in wood. The purport of the verse will thus be: We heard of the ark formerly as abiding at Shiloh of Ephraim; but when we sought for it, to bring it to Zion, we found it amidst the woods of Kirjath-jearim.

8. *Arise, O Lord*. These were the opening words of the formula used by Moses, when the ark was set forward during the journeyings of the Israelites—Num. x. 35. *Into thy rest*; the permanent sanctuary in the temple. *Thou and the ark of thy strength*; "the symbol of thy power and



- Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness ;  
 And let thy saints shout for joy.
- 10 For thy servant David's sake  
 Turn not away the face of thine anointed.
- 11 The LORD hath sworn *in* truth unto David ;  
 He will not turn from it ;  
 Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.
- 12 If thy children will keep my covenant  
 And my testimony that I shall teach them,  
 Their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore.
- 13 For the LORD hath chosen Zion ;  
 He hath desired *it* for his habitation.
- 14 This *is* my rest for ever :  
 Here will I dwell ; for I have desired it.
- 15 I will abundantly bless her provision :  
 I will satisfy her poor with bread.
- 16 I will also clothe her priests with salvation :  
 And her saints shall shout aloud for joy.
- 17 There will I make the horn of David to bud :  
 I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.

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majesty."—*Phillips*. The ark, however, was "no mere symbol, but an image and pledge of the real presence of God with His people."—*Hengstenberg*. The same expression occurs in the parallel passage, 2 Chron. vi. 41 ; compare Psalm lxxviii. 61.

9. *Thy saints* ; see on Psalm lxxxvi. 2.

10. *For thy servant David's sake turn not away the face of thine anointed*. For the sake of David, and thy promise to him, reject not the prayer of him who now sits upon his throne as the anointed king of thy people.

16. "In verse 9, the prayer of the Psalmist to God is that the priests may be clothed with righteousness ; and in this concluding portion of the Psalm, where God is declaring what He will do to the king and city of His people, He promises to grant even more than was asked for in the petition : *I will clothe her priests with salvation* ; not with righteousness only, but with what is the consequence or reward of righteousness—salvation."—*Phillips*. *Salvation* is the word used in the parallel passage of Solomon's prayer.—2 Chron. vi. 41.

17. *There will I make the horn of David to bud*. This figure, derived from those animals whose strength and means of defence consist chiefly in their horns, is familiarly used in the East. "Yes, that man will flourish ; already

18 His enemies will I clothe with shame :  
But upon himself shall his crown flourish.

PSALM CXXXIII.

A Song of degrees of David.

This Psalm is by many supposed to have been written when the dissensions between the houses of Saul and David had ceased, and all the tribes concurred at Hebron in making David their king (2 Sam. v. 1); but the allusion to Zion (verse 3), in connection with the succeeding words, as the place of the sanctuary, seems opposed to so early a date, as the ark had not then been placed there. It is of a general character, and may not have been occasioned by any particular event. Hengstenberg remarks that the *behold* with which it commences, shows that the Psalmist had before his eyes a lovely meeting of brethren; that this had a religious centre, as indicated by the whole character of the Psalm, particularly by the allusion to the priesthood; and it was probably the assembling of the people at Zion at one of the great festivals; with which the superscription entirely coincides. The name of David is omitted in several of the old versions. The Psalmist illustrates the excellence and loveliness of harmony among brethren by two apposite and beautiful comparisons, the *precious ointment* and the mountain dew, diffusing fragrance and fertility.

- 1 BEHOLD, how good and how pleasant *it is*  
For brethren to dwell together in unity !
- 2 *It is* like the precious ointment upon the head,  
That ran down upon the beard, *even Aaron's beard*:  
That went down to the skirts of his garments;

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his horn has begun to appear, it is growing."—*Roberts*. "A horn is an emblem of power and sovereignty; and as one horn dropped off, another sprung up, till the budding forth of the Messiah, 'the horn of salvation' (Luke i. 69); and the *lamp* or family of David was not extinguished till the 'Sun of Righteousness arose with healing in His wings.'"—*B.C.B.*

18. *But upon himself shall his crown flourish.* The word *flourish*, it has been remarked, does not appear strictly appropriate to crowns of gold or jewels, and the idea may have been derived from the crowns of laurel, olive, and ivy bestowed upon those who had conquered in the field, gained the prize in the race, or performed some important service to the public. These were the dear-bought rewards of the most heroic exploits of antiquity, and adorned the heads of the victors in full verdure.—See *Burder's Oriental Customs*.

PSALM cxxxiii. 2. *The precious ointment*, literally, *the good oil*, denotes the "holy anointing oil," which was compounded of several spices mingled with oil, as directed in Ex. xxx. 22-33, and was appropriated exclusively to the consecration of the priests and of the tabernacle with its appurtenances. When poured copiously upon the head, a portion of it would naturally extend to

8 As the dew of Hermon,

*And as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion :*

For there the LORD commanded the blessing,

*Even life for evermore.*

the upper part or border of the garment or robe. Such is the meaning of the word used by the Psalmist, which is literally *mouth* ; and is employed in describing the investiture of Aaron as high priest (Ex. xxviii. 32), there rendered "the *hole* in the top of the robe of the ephod." It occurs in Job xxx. 18, where it is rendered *collar*, but nowhere denotes the *skirt*, or lower hem of the garment, which, in the next verse to that just quoted (Ex. xxviii. 33), is expressed by another word ; nor is it very probable that the oil would be poured upon the *head* in such profusion as to flow down to the extremities, especially as some of it was also *sprinkled* upon the garments of Aaron and his sons (Lev. viii. 30), thus diffusing its fragrance over their whole persons. "The epithet *good*," observes Hengstenberg, "does not refer simply to the physical quality of the oil. The Psalmist views it with a spiritual eye, and so viewed, it served as an image to him of what was most glorious and lovely, it was the symbol of the Spirit of God."

3. The first part of this verse, without the words supplied by the translators, would read, *As the dew of Hermon, that descended upon the mountains of Zion.* Not the dew that flowed from Hermon to Zion, but that it was the same in its nature and quality that descended upon both. The word *descend*, indeed, is not quite philosophically correct as applied to dew, which does not fall, as such, upon the objects which it covers, but is formed upon them by the condensation of atmospheric vapour, coming in contact with a colder substance. Its real nature and origin appear to have been but little understood till within a recent period, and, in common parlance, we still speak of dew *falling*. Some of the ancients, as remarked on Psalm cxxi. 6, regarded the moon as the source of cold and dew, mistaking, no doubt, a simple coincidence for cause and effect,—a cool, clear atmosphere, when the heavenly bodies shine with the greatest brilliancy, promoting, at the same time, the radiation of heat from the earth and other substances, and thus producing a copious deposit of dew. *For there the Lord commanded the blessing.* Some refer these words to verse 1, *there*, where brotherly love reigns ; but the most direct and appropriate reference is to the word immediately preceding, *the mountains of Zion*, the Lord's sanctuary. "Brotherly unity resembles a lovely dew which descends on the hills of Zion, where this unity is so strikingly exemplified. To Zion, which comes here into consideration as the then bearer of the kingdom of God, belong blessing and prosperity generally, therefore, also, the blessing and prosperity connected with brotherly unity, such as is not to be found in the world, nor grows on the soil of nature, but only in that of grace, which is confined to the kingdom of God."—*Hengstenberg*.

PSALM CXXXIV.

A Song of degrees.

The call to bless the Lord (verses 1, 2) may be regarded as addressed by the people, or the pilgrims, assembled at the temple in the evening, to the priests and Levites appointed to keep the nightly watch, who, in verse 3, pronounce upon them a benediction in return; "or the Psalm might have been used by the watchers themselves—a sort of watch-song, accustomed to be sung as an exercise of piety, when they were engaged in the discharge of the labours of their office."—*Phillips*. The former seems most in accordance with the title, and the view taken before of "the Songs of Degrees," of which the present thus forms an appropriate conclusion. "The behold, in verse 1, the echo of that in the preceding Psalm, shows that the subject is a business immediately in hand."—*Hengstenberg*.

- 1 BEHOLD, bless ye the LORD,  
All ye servants of the LORD,  
Which by night stand in the house of the LORD.
- 2 Lift up your hands in the sanctuary,  
And bless the LORD.
- 3 The LORD that made heaven and earth  
Bless thee out of Zion.

PSALM CXXXV.

There is nothing in the contents of this Psalm marking the occasion or time of its composition, except a Chaldaism in verse 9, which indicates a post-exilian date. "The subject," remarks Dimock, "seems peculiarly adapted to the celebration of their annual festivals, in which it was highly proper for them to recite the mercies vouchsafed to them from the Exodus to settling them in the land of Canaan." The opening verses closely resemble the preceding Psalm, but are expressed in more general terms. The Psalmist calls upon the servants of the Lord to praise Him, in commemoration of His glory and power, as displayed in the phenomena of nature, and for His wonderful works to Israel; contrasting with them the vanity of idols, and concluding with a renewed call to bless the Lord, in terms apparently taken, for the most part, from Psalm cxv. 8-12. The preceding description of idols is also, with the omission of one verse, nearly the same as verses 4-8 of Psalm cxv., and verses 6, 7, are an expansion of verse 3 of that Psalm. Verse 7 occurs twice, word for word, though preceded by another clause, in the book of Jeremiah (x. 13, li. 16); and verses 8-12 are an abridgement, or, more probably, the germ, of a considerable part of the next Psalm. The *Hallelujah* at the commencement, which announces the purport of the Psalm, is in the old versions written as a title; that at the end, as the title of Psalm cxxxvi.

- 1 PRAISE ye the LORD.  
Praise ye the name of the LORD;  
Praise him, O ye servants of the LORD.

- 2 Ye that stand in the house of the LORD,  
In the courts of the house of our God,
- 3 Praise the LORD ;  
For the LORD *is* good :  
Sing praises unto his name ; for *it is* pleasant.
- 4 For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself,  
*And* Israel for his peculiar treasure.
- 5 For I know that the LORD *is* great,  
*And that* our Lord *is* above all gods.
- 6 Whatsoever the LORD pleased, *that* did he,  
In heaven, and in earth,  
In the seas, and all deep places.
- 7 He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth ;  
He maketh lightnings for the rain ;  
He bringeth the wind out of his treasures.
- 8 Who smote the firstborn of Egypt,  
Both of man and beast.
- 9 *Who* sent tokens and wonders  
Into the midst of thee, O Egypt,  
Upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants.
- 10 Who smote great nations,  
And slew mighty kings ;

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PSALM CXXXV. 3. *Sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant; i.e., to sing praises; or, as it may be rendered, for he, or it (his name), is lovely, which forms a more exact parallel with the Lord is good, in the previous line.*

7. *He causeth the vapours, or clouds, to ascend from the ends, Hebrew end, of the earth; i.e., as some understand it, from the sea at the extremity of the land, or from the horizon, the apparent boundary of the earth; but the term probably signifies simply the whole or every part of the earth; see Psalm lxi. 2, and note, and Gen. xix. 4, where "from every quarter," is literally, from the end. He maketh lightnings for the rain.* How lightnings can be said to be made for the rain is not very apparent. Some render, *He changes lightnings to rain*, of which they are often the precursor; but it seems preferable to take the particle in the sense of *with*, as our translators have done in both the parallel passages in Jeremiah—*He maketh lightnings with rain*; the Psalmist probably having had in view the remarkable phenomenon exhibited by a thunder-storm, in the simultaneous production of the two contrary elements, fire and water, from the same source.

- 11 Sihon, king of the Amorites,  
And Og, king of Bashan,  
And all the kingdoms of Canaan :
- 12 And gave their land *for* an heritage,  
An heritage unto Israel his people.
- 13 Thy name, O LORD, *endureth* for ever ;  
And thy memorial, O LORD, throughout all generations.
- 14 For the LORD will judge his people,  
And he will repent himself concerning his servants.
- 15 The idols of the heathen *are* silver and gold,  
The work of men's hands.
- 16 They have mouths, but they speak not ;  
Eyes have they, but they see not ;
- 17 They have ears, but they hear not ;  
Neither is there *any* breath in their mouths.
- 18 They that make them are like unto them :  
*So* is every one that trusteth in them.

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14. *The Lord will judge his people.* This expression may signify to execute judgment, either *upon* them, or *for* them. The Italian version gives the former sense: "When the Lord has performed his judgments upon his people, he will repent himself for love of his servants;" but it is generally understood in the other sense, as *agreeing*, not *contrasting*, with the parallel line; and this is more in harmony with the literal rendering of the verse, as in our version, and with the general purport of the Psalm: The Lord will maintain the cause of his people, and *repent himself concerning his servants*; i.e., forego their punishment and show them mercy.

17. *Neither is there any breath in their mouths.* The first word in the Hebrew of this line, which our translators render as a particle, is the same as the noun for *nose*, in the parallel passage (Psalm cxv. 6), which reads, *Noses have they, but they smell not*, and some suppose the latter words have been lost from the present text. It may, however, be rendered as it stands, by merely supplying the ellipsis of *have they*:—*Noses have they, but there is no breath in their mouths*; the want of breath applying both to the mouth and nostrils. Some copies of the Septuagint read this verse as in Psalm cxv. 6, and add the succeeding one: "They have hands, but they handle not; feet have they, but they walk not; neither speak they through their throat;" which is wanting in the Hebrew of the present Psalm, and has, no doubt, been inserted from Psalm cxv.

- 19 Bless the LORD, O house of Israel :  
Bless the LORD, O house of Aaron :  
20 Bless the LORD, O house of Levi :  
Ye that fear the LORD, bless the LORD.  
21 Blessed be the LORD out of Zion,  
Which dwelleth at Jerusalem.  
Praise ye the LORD.

### PSALM CXXXVI.

This Psalm is an expansion, with considerable additions, of six verses (8-12) of the preceding. It is supposed by some to have been sung on laying the foundation-stone of the second temple, when the people "sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord, because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel."—Ezra iii. 11. The words which form the burden of this Psalm were, however, employed also on the occasion of bringing the ark to Zion (1 Chron. xvi. 34, 41), on the dedication of Solomon's temple (2 Chron. v. 13, vii. 3), and on the promise to King Jehoshaphat of deliverance from the invading Moabites and Ammonites (2 Chron. xx. 21); they are the commencement of three other Psalms (cvi., cvii., and cxviii.), and were, no doubt, a doxology in frequent use; yet there is no improbability in the supposition of the present Psalm having been composed for the occasion referred to, especially as verses 23, 24, appear to refer expressly to the deliverance from Babylon. "It seems evidently to have been a responsive song, the first part of the verse being probably sung by the Levites, and the burden by the people."—*B.C.B.*

- 1 O GIVE thanks unto the LORD ; for *he* is good :  
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.  
2 Oh give thanks unto the God of gods :  
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.  
3 Oh give thanks to the Lord of lords :  
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.  
4 To him who alone doeth great wonders :  
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.

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19; 20. These verses vary considerably from the original passage, as it probably is, in Psalm cxv; the corresponding passages of which are verses 9-12.

PSALM cxxxvi. 2, 3. "These verses rest upon Dent. x. 17: 'For the Lord your God is the God of gods, and the Lord of lords.'"—*Hangstenberg.*

- 5 To him that by wisdom made the heavens :  
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- 6 To him that stretched out the earth above the waters :  
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- 7 To him that made great lights :  
For his mercy *endureth* for ever :
- 8 The sun to rule by day :  
For his mercy *endureth* for ever :
- 9 The moon and stars to rule by night :  
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- 10 To him that smote Egypt in their firstborn :  
For his mercy *endureth* for ever :
- 11 And brought out Israel from among them :  
For his mercy *endureth* for ever :
- 12 With a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm :  
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- 13 To him which divided the Red Sea into parts :  
For his mercy *endureth* for ever :
- 14 And made Israel to pass through the midst of it :  
For his mercy *endureth* for ever :
- 15 But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea :  
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- 16 To him which led his people through the wilderness :  
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- 17 To him which smote great kings :  
For his mercy *endureth* for ever :
- 18 And slew famous kings :  
For his mercy *endureth* for ever :
- 19 Sihon, king of the Amorites :  
For his mercy *endureth* for ever :

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6. *That stretched out the earth above, or upon, the waters.* "This," remarks Dr. A. Clarke, "seems to refer to a central abyss of waters, the existence of which has not yet been disproved." Nor, it may be added, has it been *proved* ; but the Psalmist appears to allude simply to the gathering together of the waters into one place, that the dry land might appear.  
—Gen. i. 9.



- 20 And Og, the king of Bashan :  
 For his mercy *endureth* for ever :
- 21 And gave their land for an heritage :  
 For his mercy *endureth* for ever :
- 22 *Even* an heritage unto Israel his servant :  
 For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- 23 Who remembered us in our low estate :  
 For his mercy *endureth* for ever :
- 24 And hath redeemed us from our enemies :  
 For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- 25 Who giveth food to all flesh :  
 For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- 26 Oh give thanks unto the God of heaven :  
 For his mercy *endureth* for ever.

#### PSALM CXXXVII.

"The author of this beautiful and affecting elegy is unknown ; but the occasion is evident."—*B.C.B.* Some infer from the use of the past tense, in verses 1-3, that the Psalm was composed *after* the release of the captives, but the mode of expression would be quite suitable in reference to incidents which had actually occurred, though still in the condition which had given rise to them, and might occasion their recurrence ; and the succeeding verses bespeak the feelings of one who had a personal and vivid recollection of Jerusalem, and of its destruction, which, as the captivity lasted seventy years, could hardly, in the course of nature, be possessed by one writing after its close, nor would the resolution, not to forget Jerusalem, be then appropriate.

- 1 BY the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down,  
 Yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.
- 

PSALM cxxxvii. 1. *By the rivers of Babylon.* The city of Babylon had only *one river*, the Euphrates ; but the Hebrew word may signify any running stream ; or *Babylon* may here denote the kingdom, comprehending other rivers in the vicinity of which the captives were located, as the Chebar, mentioned in Ezek. i. 1, 3, and the Ulai, Dan. viii. 2. The reason why they are depicted as sitting by the rivers, is probably simply because that was an appropriate posture and situation for pensive and devout meditation.

- 2 We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.  
 3 For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song ;  
 And they that wasted us *required of us mirth*,  
 Saying, Sing us *one of the songs of Zion*.  
 4 How shall we sing the LORD's song in a strange land ?  
 5 If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,  
 Let my right hand forget *her cunning*.  
 6 If I do not remember thee,  
 Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth ;  
 If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

---

"The children of Israel placed themselves beside the streams of Babel, because they saw in them the image and symbol of their floods of tears."—*Hengstenberg*. *We wept, when we remembered Zion*. "The remembering of Zion is no patriotic one in the ordinary sense ; it comes into view, not so much as the civil, as the spiritual capital, the place where the Lord dwelt with His people. To be separated from Zion was to be separated from God, the source of all life and joy."—*Hengstenberg*.

2. "*Willows* were so plentiful at Babylon, on the banks of the Euphrates, that Isaiah calls it 'the brook or river of willows ;' and Sir R. K. Porter (vol. II. p. 295) says : 'Its banks were hoary with reeds, and the grey osier willows were yet there, on which the captives of Israel hung up their harps, and, while Jerusalem was not, refused to be comforted.'"—*B.C.B.*

3. The requirement of the Babylonians, even though prompted, as it might be, by interest or curiosity, or a desire to be entertained by listening to the native strains of their captives, without intending to insult their feelings, could not fail to add poignancy to their sorrowful thoughts and recollections ; and though, from the manner in which their harps are mentioned, it may be inferred they were not altogether disused *in a strange land*, they would feel great reluctance to employ them for the gratification of their spoilers, especially as demanded, in a cheerful strain, altogether incompatible with the feelings of their hearts, or involving, in any degree, an indifference to their present condition, or forgetfulness of their beloved country.

4-6. Some understand these verses as the reply of the captives to the preceding requisition ; but they seem to be rather the free expression amongst themselves of the sentiments which had thus been excited.

5. *Let my right hand forget her cunning*. The ellipsis in the Hebrew is well supplied by the latter word, though, in the sense in which it is here used, it is almost obsolete : *Let my right hand lose its power, or skill ; that quality denoted by the word formed from its Latin name, dexterity*. A similar,

- 7 Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom,  
 In the day of Jerusalem;  
 Who said, Rase it,  
 Rase it, *even* to the foundation thereof.  
 8 O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed,

---

and, as it appears, proverbial expression, is found in an old Arabian poem:—"No! never have I done anything that could displease thee. If this is not true, may my hand be unable to lift its scourge." And in a Hindoo book it is written: "Singā Muggain, on seeing that, his heart throbbed, the tears flowed, and his hands and feet forgot their cunning." "Yes, if I lose thee and forget thee, it will be like the losing, like the forgetting, of these eyes and arms."—*Burder and Roberts*.—Compare Job xxxi. 22. In a solemn asseveration of this kind, the hand and tongue might naturally be brought into view, as the instruments of action and speech, the loss of which would constitute the most severe deprivation; but they have a peculiar appropriateness in the present instance, as those which would be employed in giving effect to the feelings which the pious exiles so strongly deprecate. "If I, misapplying my right hand to the playing of joyful strains on my instrument, forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my misemployed hand lose its capacity to play, and my tongue, misemployed in singing cheerful songs, its capacity to sing."—*Hengstenberg*.

7. The Psalmist concludes by invoking the Divine retribution of the Edomites for their exultation at the destruction of Jerusalem, and declaring the impending doom of Babylon herself, in accordance with the prophecies which had been uttered by Isaiah and Jeremiah. The Edomites, though, as the descendants of Esau, they were brothers of the Israelites, through their common ancestor Isaac, yet cherished a strong feeling of jealousy and hatred against them, as was evinced by the refusal to allow them to pass through their land on their passage to Canaan, and by subsequent hostilities on various occasions; and it appears from the present passage, compared with Ezekiel xxxv. and Obadiah, 10-14, that, *in the day of Jerusalem, i.e., at the time of its capture and destruction*, they were associated with the Chaldeans, "as one of them," instigating and aiding them in the work of spoliation and slaughter, "rejoicing over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction," and "speaking proudly in the day of their distress." For these things, they are severely reprov'd, and the Divine judgments are pronounced upon them by those prophets, as well as by Jeremiah—*Lam. iv. 21, 22*. "The Lord has now remembered to them for a long time the day of Jerusalem; they have disappeared, without leaving a trace behind."—*Hengstenberg*.

8, 9. *O daughter of Babylon; i.e., people or inhabitants (see on Psalm xlv. 12),*

Happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee  
As thou hast served us.

9 Happy shall he be, that taketh  
And dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

PSALM CXXXVIII.

*A Psalm of David.*

This Psalm is generally considered to have been composed by David, when he was firmly and peacefully established in his kingdom, and, in the opinion of Hengstenberg, with especial reference to the promise to him and his posterity through the prophet Nathan.—2 Sam. vii. The spirit which it breathes of triumphant gratitude for blessings of surpassing greatness, is quite in harmony with David's thanksgiving on that occasion; and the allusion to *kings*, in verse 4, comes with peculiar force and propriety from the lips of one who was himself a king.

1 I WILL praise thee with my whole heart :  
Before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.

*who art to be destroyed* ; literally, *O daughter of Babylon, the destroyed*. Some infer from this expression that the Psalm was composed after the taking of Babylon by Cyrus, which led to the release of the Jews, or even after that by Darius Hystaspes, which was the commencement of its complete destruction; but in prophetic language future events are frequently spoken of as already accomplished, and the succeeding words of these two verses would be inappropriate after the latter at least, of those events, when the scenes described would have taken place. Some, however, render the word as in the Chaldee form, in which, considering the period and circumstances of this Psalm, there seems no impropriety, and which gives it an active and more emphatic sense—the *destroying one*, or *destroyer*. The Psalmist pronounces him *happy*, or *prosperous*, who should be the instrument of executing the retributive justice of God upon Babylon, in language identical with that of Isaiah xiii. 16, and characteristic of the cruelties commonly perpetrated in ancient times on the inhabitants of conquered cities, but involving no sanction of such atrocities. Homer speaks of—

“ Infants dashed

Against the ground in dire hostility.”

And, again, Andromache, addressing her child ;—

“ Or haply some Achaian here, thy hand  
Seizing, shall hurl thee from a turret top  
To a sad death.”

*Cowper's version*, book XXII. l. 70, XXIV. l. 925.

PSALM CXXXVIII. 1. *I will praise thee*. The old versions, and several MSS.,

- 2 I will worship toward thy holy temple,  
 And praise thy name,  
 For thy lovingkindness and for thy truth :  
 For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.
- 3 In the day when I cried thou answeredst me,  
 And strengthenedst me *with* strength in my soul.
- 4 All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O Lord,  
 When they hear the words of thy mouth.
- 5 Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the Lord :  
 For great is the glory of the Lord.
- 6 Though the Lord *be* high, yet hath he respect unto the  
 lowly :  
 But the proud he knoweth afar off.

add *Jehovah*. "That the Psalmist," remarks Hengstenberg, "addresses the Lord without naming Him, shows that his whole soul was really full of Him." *Before the gods, or God*; the Hebrew word, being used in the plural form for the true God, might be so rendered here; but this, whether taken in the literal sense, *in thy presence*, or, as some understand it, *before the ark, will I sing praise unto thee*, would be mere tautology, or at least deprive the passage of all point or energy. The old translators render *angels, judges, or kings*; but there is no necessity for, or advantage in, departing from the ordinary sense of the word, as applied to the heathen deities, which, though "nothing in the world," are sometimes personified and brought into view, as false and presumptuous pretenders in contrast to the one true God.

2. *For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name*. Some, supplying the copulative, render, *Thou hast magnified above all, thy name and thy word*. Boothroyd: "For thou hast magnified by thy promise, thy name above every name." But the common version, which is literal, probably expresses the true sense: "That God's promises are so great, and His performance of them so exact and true, as even to surpass previous expectations, notwithstanding His great name."—*Phillips*.

4, 5. These verses may refer more immediately to the neighbouring kings, who heard of the fame of David, and of the Divine promises and blessings bestowed upon him (see 1 Chron. xiv. 1, 17); but they apply in a much more extensive sense to the spread of true religion in the world through the Gospel. *They shall sing in, or concerning, the ways of the Lord*; celebrate His power and glory.

∴ 6. *But the proud he knoweth afar off*; i.e., as some explain it, regards with aversion or disapprobation. This is a true sentiment, and deducible from

- 7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me :  
 Thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of  
 mine enemies,  
 And thy right hand shall save me.
- 8 The LORD will perfect *that which* concerneth me :  
 Thy mercy, O LORD, *endureth* for ever :  
 Forsake not the works of thine own hands.

PSALM CXXXIX.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

Several unusual forms of expression, which appear to be rather Chaldean than Hebrew, have been thought to militate against the ascription of this Psalm to David, in which all the versions concur with the Hebrew title; the Alexandrine copy of the Septuagint adding, "of Zechariah in the Dispersion." The supposed Chaldaisms may have arisen from a slight change of orthography on the part of transcribers. The Psalm is quite in the spirit and style of David; and "in its general plan and moral arrangement," remarks Jebb, "it much resembles Psalm xix. It begins, as that, with meditations on the wonders of God's handiwork, and from thence passes on to the contemplation of His spiritual law; and ends with a prayer for the chastening of the Psalmist's own spirit, and the guidance of his ways. But it is plainly an advance upon the former Psalm, and contains many topics there unnoticed—God's omnipresence and the influence of His Spirit, and the prophet's hatred of God's enemies. There is no Psalm in the whole collection which affords a more perfect model for the meditation of the faithful."

1 O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known *me*.

the scope of the passage, but does not appear to be actually expressed by the words quoted, which are coincident with those in Psalm cxxxix. 2: "Thou understandest my thought afar off." The present verse may be more literally rendered:—

For the Lord is high, but he seeth the lowly, or humble:  
 And the proud he knoweth afar off, or from afar;—

the *knowing from afar* in the second line being parallel with the *seeing from on high* in the former. The sense, divesting the passage of its poetic form, may be thus expressed: Though the Lord is on high and afar, He discerns the hearts of all, and sees and knows the humble and the proud. It is analogous to Psalm cxlii. 6, where see note.

8. The Lord will perfect *that which* concerneth me; i.e., fulfil and complete all His gracious promises and designs concerning me.

- 2 Thou knowest my downsitteing and mine uprising,  
Thou understandest my thought afar off.
- 3 Thou compassesest my path and my lying down,  
And art acquainted *with* all my ways.
- 4 For *there is* not a word in my tongue,  
But, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.
- 5 Thou hast beset me behind and before,  
And laid thine hand upon me.
- 6 *Such knowledge is* too wonderful for me ;  
It is high, I cannot attain unto it.

PSALM CXXXIX. 2. *My downsitteing* ; rather, *my resting*, or *lying down to rest*. *Thou understandest my thought afar off*. Some, connecting the latter word with *thought*, explain : Thou understandest my distant thoughts, the thoughts not yet conceived in my mind ; but this, however true in itself, does not appear to be the proper sense of the passage, which is more literally, *Thou understandest my thought from afar*, and is analogous to Psalm CXXXVIII. 6 (where see note), declaring the omniscience of God, though afar off as regards mortal sight. " God is not shut up in heaven, as if He delighted in an idle repose, as the Epicureans feigned, and neglected human affairs ; but, though we live at a great distance from Him, still He is not far from us."—*Calvin*.

3. *Thou compassesest*, or, as the marginal rendering which seems better supported by the usage of the Hebrew verb, *Thou winnowest, siftest, or discoverest, my path and my lying down*, or, as some render, *my couch* ; the *path* and *couch*, the place of action, and the place of rest, answering in this verse to the verbs by which the same ideas are expressed in verse 2.

4-6. Some render : *When there is not a word in my tongue, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether* ; i.e., Thou knowest my thoughts before they are expressed in words ; but this has been already declared in verse 2, and the common rendering of the present verse is preferable, the Psalmist proceeding in these three verses from thoughts to actions and words. " In verse 5 the Psalmist advances from the territory of the *all-knowing* to that of the *all-present*, an easy and gentle transition, since, according to the view of Scripture, the omniscience of God is founded in His omnipresence ;" but, before proceeding " further in the representation, he breaks out, in verse 6, into admiration of the superhuman glory, so far exceeding even all human conception. The *knowledge* must, according to several interpreters, be the *Divine* ; but what is meant is rather the human knowledge of the Divine omniscience and omnipresence, which always falls infinitely short of its infinite object, and worships before it without being able to penetrate its depths."—*Hengstenberg*.

- 7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit ?  
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence ?  
8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou *art* there :  
If I make my bed in hell, behold thou *art there*.  
9 If I take the wings of the morning,  
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea ;  
10 Even there shall thy hand lead me,  
And thy right hand shall hold me.  
11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me ;  
Even the night shall be light about me.

8. *If I make my bed in hell, or the abyss ;* see on Psalm xvi. 10. The etymological sense of our English word, the *concealed*, or *covered place*, expresses precisely the idea here intended—the depths or recesses of the earth, in opposition to the material heavens.

9. *If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell, &c.* Instead of *and*, for which there is nothing in the Hebrew, we may supply *or*, or *if*, as in the previous clause, taking the two lines as in contrast, not in continuation: If I fly to the east, soaring as on the wings of the morning dawn, or the rays of the rising sun ; or if I go to the extreme west, where his parting beams appear to sink in the ocean wave. But they may be taken in continuity, and explained as in B.C.B.: “ Could I even fly upon the wings or rays of the morning light, which diffuses itself with such velocity over the globe from east to west, instead of being beyond thy reach, or, by this sudden transition be able to escape thy notice, thy arm could still at pleasure arrest my progress, and I should still be encircled with the immensity of thy essence.” The Mediterranean forming the western boundary of Palestine, the Hebrews were accustomed to denote the west by the word *sea* ; and the *uttermost parts of the sea* here designate the farthest west, or opposite to the east, denoted by the *wings of the morning*. The terms in the present verse indicate length and breadth, as those in the preceding, height and depth ; thus comprehending the whole universe pervaded by the omnipresence of God.

11. *If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me.* The precise meaning of the Hebrew verb is uncertain. Some render, *shall crush*, or *oppress me*, which is not inappropriate, as the purpose of the Psalmist is to show the impossibility, not only of escaping the all-seeing eye of God, but also of being placed beyond the reach of His guidance and protection. The latter, indeed, appears to be rather the prominent idea, from the use of the words *lead* and *hold* in verse 10, and the further illustration in verses 13–16, derived from His forming and preserving care of man in the incipient stages of existence. *Even the night shall be light about me.* The Chaldee reads, “ And the



- 12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee ;  
 But the night shineth as the day :  
 The darkness and the light *are* both alike to thee.
- 13 For thou hast possessed my reins :  
 Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.
- 14 I will praise thee ;  
 For I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made :  
 Marvellous *are* thy works ;  
 And *that* my soul knoweth right well.
- 15 My substance was not hid from thee,  
 When I was made in secret, *and* curiously wrought  
 In the lowest parts of the earth.

night shall be obscure about me ;" making this line complementary of the idea in the preceding one, and reserving the antithesis to the next verse ; but this, which appears a preferable reading, is not supported by any of the other versions or Hebrew MSS.

13. *For thou hast possessed*, or, as it may be rendered, *hast formed, my reins*. The *reins*, or kidneys, denote the inmost recesses of the corporeal frame, and were regarded as the "seat of the desires and feelings, the region where sinful passion boils, and where pain also plants its seat. This region God has in His power, as the Creator of man ; and so nothing can be concealed from Him which passes in this secret workshop."—*Hengstenberg*. See on Psalm xvi. 7. *Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb*. "The covering consists, according to what follows, in the oversight and protection exercised by God in regard to the germ of life, which is perfectly impotent in itself."—*Hengstenberg*.

14. *I am fearfully and wonderfully made*. Though the Hebrew of the former word—literally, *I am wonderfully*, or *admirably, distinguished*—is derived from the root to *fear*, it does not necessarily include that idea in its strict sense, but simply that of *wonderful*, or *admirable* ; nor does the succeeding verb express the sense of *making*, or *forming*. As, however, the whole passage refers to the structure of the human body, our version represents its true import perhaps more forcibly and correctly than a more literal one would do.

15. *Curiously wrought* ; "embroidered, or wrought as with a needle, referring to the external covering of the human body, as the word rendered *substance* does to the bony skeleton, the foundation of the whole."—*B.C.B.* In the last clause, the particle of comparison, *as*, may be understood—*as in the lowest parts of the earth* ; in the laboratory of nature, as concealed and impervious to all human sight as the depths of the earth.

- 16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect;  
And in thy book all *my members* were written,  
*Which* in continuance were fashioned,  
When *as yet there was* none of them.
- 17 How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God !  
How great is the sum of them !

16. *Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect.* The last four terms represent a single word of three letters in the Hebrew (not the same as that rendered *substance* in verse 15), from the root, *to roll, or wind up*; denoting the unformed mass, or germ, of the future body, the roll, or "ball, of the thread of human life" (*Hengstenberg*), containing the element of every lineament, joint, and limb, which, in process of time, would be developed and brought to perfection, according to the design of the Divine artificer, as exactly as the work of the embroiderer or of the architect is executed after the prescribed plan or pattern. This is, no doubt, the general sense of the verse, though there is some doubt as to the precise import of the latter clauses, arising from the concise and elliptical phraseology of the original. *Hengstenberg*, closely following Luther, renders: "And in thy book were they all written, the days which were still to be, and of which none then was;" but our version seems preferable to this and others which have been proposed: *In thy book all of them were written*; all the members or component parts of my frame were pre-arranged by Thee. *Which in continuance, or more literally, day by day, were fashioned*; were gradually assuming their prescribed form. In the last clause some supply *was wanting*—*And none of them was wanting, or deficient*; but this is unnecessary, if we consider the previous line parenthetical, and connect this in sense with the one preceding: *In thy book all my members were written, when as yet there was none of them*; i.e., ere any of them were yet formed. "The consolatory tendency of the Psalm comes here distinctly out. If our whole being is by God pre-arranged, how then, can anything befall us which He has not in His hand, which He does not see, or in regard to which He is unable at the proper time to administer help to us."—*Hengstenberg*.

17. *Thy thoughts* may mean either God's thoughts, His gracious designs and care of man, or the Psalmist's thoughts of God and His goodness. The latter idea seems favoured by the connection with the next verse, which forms with the present an introverted parallel; the first and fourth line answering to each other, and the second and third, thus:—

How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God !

How great is the sum of them !

If I should count them, they are more than can be numbered :  
When I awake I am still with thee.

- 18 *If I should count them,  
They are more in number than the sand :  
When I awake, I am still with thee.*
- 19 *Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God :  
Depart from me therefore, ye bloody men.*
- 20 *For they speak against thee wickedly,  
And thine enemies take thy name in vain.*
- 21 *Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee ?  
And am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee ?*
- 22 *I hate them with perfect hatred :  
I count them mine enemies.*
- 23 *Search me, O God, and know my heart :  
Try me, and know my thoughts :*
- 24 *And see if there be any wicked way in me,  
And lead me in the way everlasting.*

## PSALM CXL.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

This and the two following Psalms are generally considered to have been composed by David while suffering from the persecutions of Saul. Verses 4 and 5 of the present Psalm are appropriately referred by Kimchi to Saul's direction to the Ziphites, "to know and see where his haunt is," and "take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself"—1 Sam. xxiii. 21-23. This Psalm is divided by *Selah* into four parts. The first (verses 1-3), is a prayer against the devices of his enemies. In the second (verses 4, 5), a like prayer is made, imploring protection from the schemes now brought into action. In the third (verses 6-8), the supplication is repeated with greater confidence from the recollection of past mercies. The last (verses 9-13), refers again to the *man of words*, or evil designs (the *evil speaker*), and the *man of violence*, or evil actions ; concluding with an expression of confidence that God would hear his prayer and maintain his cause.

"In the last line the Psalmist does not praise *his seal* in maintaining fellowship with God, but the glorious riches of these thoughts themselves, which so chain him that he cannot isolate himself from God ; that God is not merely his thought by day, but also his dream by night."—*Hengstenberg*.

21, 22. This strong language must be understood as directed against the wicked as such—against their character and conduct, rather than their persons. "With such hearty abhorrence of the wicked, the Psalmist can call upon God, in conclusion, to search and prove him, even to the lowest depths of his heart."—*Hengstenberg*.

- 1 DELIVER me, O LORD, from the evil man :  
Preserve me from the violent man ;
- 2 Which imagine mischiefs in *their* heart ;  
Continually are they gathered together *for* war.
- 3 They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent ;  
Adders' poison *is* under their lips. Selah.
- 4 Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked ;  
Preserve me from the violent man ;  
Who have purposed to overthrow my goings.
- 5 The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords ;  
They have spread a net by the wayside ;  
They have set gins for me. Selah.
- 6 I said unto the LORD, Thou *art* my God :  
Hear the voice of my supplications, O LORD.
- 7 O God the Lord, the strength of my salvation,  
Thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.
- 8 Grant not, O LORD, the desires of the wicked :  
Further not his wicked device ;  
*Lest* they exalt themselves. Selah.
- 9 *As* for the head of those that compass me about,  
Let the mischief of their own lips cover them.

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PSALM CXL. 2. *Continually are they gathered together for war ; or, Continually do they gather, or raise up, war.*

3. *They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent.* The Psalmist has been supposed to allude to the action of a serpent, when erecting his head and putting out and brandishing his tongue, as if sharpening it to inflict a wound ; but the sense may simply be : They make their tongue sharp or venomous, as those of serpents, as in the parallel passage, Psalm lxiv. 3, where the wicked are said to "whet their tongue like a sword ;" the point of comparison is in the *being sharp*, not in the *act* of sharpening. The tongue, however, strictly speaking, is not the instrument with which the serpent inflicts its injury, the venom being injected from a fang at the roof of the mouth, which it protrudes when about to strike its victim, and of which the situation is aptly described in the next line, *Adders' poison is under their lips*.

9. This verse may be rendered, *The poison of those that compass me about, even the mischief of their own lips shall cover them ;* but that of the text is preferable ; *the head* of the enemies, as pertinently remarked by Hengsten-

- 10 Let burning coals fall upon them :  
 Let them be cast into the fire ;  
 Into deep pits, that they rise not up again.
- 11 Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth :  
 Evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow *him*.
- 12 I know that the LORD will maintain  
 The cause of the afflicted,  
 And the right of the poor.
- 13 Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name :  
 The upright shall dwell in thy presence.

## PSALM CXLI.

A Psalm of David.

"This Psalm contains a very earnest petition to God, to be delivered from the hands of some furious persecutor, together with a prayer for patience, that the sufferer might not be instigated, by the injuries he had received, to a course of conduct, inconsistent with obedience to God's commandments, and with the maxims of sincere piety. The occasion of it might be David's concealment in the cave of Engedi, when Saul was manifesting the most hostile designs against him, and seemed as if determined to chase and hunt him to death."—*Phillips*.

- 1 LORD, I cry unto thee :  
 Make haste unto me ;  
 Give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee.
- 2 Let my prayer be set forth before thee *as* incense ;  
 And the lifting up of my hands *as* the evening sacrifice.

berg, with its *destructive covering*, forming the contrast to that of the Psalmist in verse 7, with its *covering* of Divine protection. To bring prominently out this contrast, the *head* is placed first in the nominative absolute, which our translators indicate by prefixing the words, *as for*.

11. This verse may be rendered, "Let not an evil speaker, a wicked man of violence, be established in the earth; let him be hunted to his overthrow."—*B.C.B.*

PSALM cxli. 2. "David, who was now driven from Judæa, and far from the sanctuary, here prays that the devotion of his heart, and the elevation of his hands might be accepted."—*B.C.B.* He refers to the daily morning and evening sacrifice. The *Mincha*, here rendered *sacrifice*, but usually *meat-offering*, was the oblation of fine flour mingled with oil, which with the drink-offering of wine accompanied the morning and evening sacrifice of a lamb. Incense was also directed to be burnt morning and evening.—See Exodus

- 8 Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth ;  
Keep the door of my lips.
- 4 Incline not my heart to *any* evil thing,  
To practise wicked works,  
With men that work iniquity :  
And let me not eat of their dainties.
- 5 Let the righteous smite me ; *it shall be* a kindness :  
And let him reprove me ;  
*It shall be* an excellent oil, *which* shall not break my head :  
For yet my prayer also *shall be* in their calamities.

xxix. 38—41, xxx. 7, 8. "The sweet-smelling incense is, in Scripture, the standing symbol of the prayer of believers, which is precious before God.—Compare Rev. v, 8, viii. 3, 4 ; Luke i. 10. With the presentation of the true incense, the Psalmist connects that of the true meat-offering. The meat-offering, the nourishment presented to God by His people, is, in the law, the symbolical representation of good works."—*Hengstenberg*.

3. *Keep the door of my lips* ; or more literally, and forming a more complete parallel with the preceding line, *Keep guard upon the door of my lips*. Some commentators seem to raise needless difficulty here, remarking that the expression *door of my lips*, is inappropriate, the lips being the door of the mouth ; but this is no doubt the idea intended, the lips being mentioned as the material of which that door is composed, as, a *gate of brass*, or a *door of cedar*. Homer's favourite phrase, *the wall, or hedge of the teeth*, which is generally supposed to refer to the lips as forming an enclosure to the teeth, may, perhaps, more correctly be explained on the same principle as the present passage, designating the teeth themselves as the wall or hedge of the mouth.

5. Most of the old versions read : *The righteous shall chasten me with mercy, and reprove me ; but let not the oil of the sinner anoint my head ; for yet, also, my prayer shall be in their pleasure, or against their desires, or wickedness*. The rendering, *oil of the sinner*, probably arises from a different reading of one word in the original. The Chaldee appears to have read according to the present Hebrew text, and paraphrases thus : "Let the righteous smite me with mercy, and reprove me ; it shall not take the anointing oil of the sanctuary from my head ; for still my prayer shall be directed against their wickedness ;" or, as some copies amplify : "Let the righteous smite me with mercy, and the priest anointing me with the holy oil of the sanctuary reprove me ; it shall not take away the crown of the kingdom from my head, for yet, &c." Modern translators render this verse variously. *Hengstenberg* :—"The righteous smites me in kindness, and chastises me. Oil for the head, my

6 When their judges are overthrown in stony places,  
They shall hear my words ; for they are sweet.

7 Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth,  
As when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth.

head refuses not. If still then I shall pray against their wickedness." The rendering adopted by our translators, seems, on the whole, the preferable one ; but the clause, *which shall not break my head*, might perhaps stand more correctly, *which my head will not refuse*. "This verse," remarks Dr. Kitto, "has greatly exercised the ingenuity of interpreters. The Septuagint, and other ancient versions, generally seem to understand it to express, that the reproofs and smittings of the righteous were better than the rich and fragrant oils of the ungodly. We are rather disposed to understand, as in our version, that the intention is, to affirm that the corrections of the righteous are, from their good intentions and beneficial effects, as excellent oils, which do not wound but heal the head on which they fall. Roberts informs us that in India, common correction is usually administered on the crown of the head. Then, on the other hand, to anoint the head is a common practice, and there are certain oils which are believed, by external application, to have a most salutary effect on the head, in the cure or prevention of the complaints to which it is subject. Now, from a combination of the ideas resulting from these images, arise certain popular forms of expression precisely equivalent to that which appears in the present text ; as, to quote no more : 'My master has been beating my head, but it has been good oil for me.' The Arabs have a proverb of equivalent meaning : 'The blow that is profitable does not hurt the neck.'"—*Illustrated Commentary*.

6. *When their judges are overthrown in stony places*. The last two words do not correctly represent the Hebrew, which is literally, *in the hand, i.e., sides, of the rock*. The preceding verb signifies either to *throw down, precipitate*, or, to *disperse, let loose, or dismiss*. Hengstenberg adopts the former sense, and explains the passage thus :—"The judges are the possessors of the world's power, who rebel against the kingdom of David, but, brought to discretion by the injuries they have received, they will at length find precious to them the hitherto despised words, by which he invites them to submit to the Lord's anointed." The reading, "*Their judges have been dismissed among, or in the sides of, the rocks, and have heard my words, that they were sweet*, referring to David's generous treatment of Saul, in the cave of Engedi," (*B.C.B.*) is that more generally adopted, and appears appropriate to the circumstances referred to, excepting, perhaps, the designation of *their judges*, as applied to Saul and his party. The word may, however, be taken in the sense of *chiefs or leaders*.

7. The word *wood*, inserted by our own and some other translators, sup-

- 8 But mine eyes *are* unto thee, O God the Lord :  
 In thee is my trust ; leave not my soul destitute.  
 9 Keep me from the snares *which* they have laid for me,  
 And the gins of the workers of iniquity.  
 10 Let the wicked fall into their own nets,  
 Whilst that I withal escape.

、 PSALM CXLII.

Maschil of David [or, *A Psalm of David, giving instruction*]; a Prayer when he was in the cave.

This Psalm is generally considered to refer, like the preceding, to the circumstances of David, in the cave of Engedi; but there is nothing in its contents inconsistent with those in the cave of Adullam; or requiring, as in the former case, a reference to any particular occurrence for their elucidation.

- 1 I CRIED unto the LORD with my voice ;  
 With my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication.  
 2 I poured out my complaint before him ;  
 I shewed before him my trouble.

posing that the Psalmist designed to compare the scattered bones to chips of wood strewed on the ground, is not, however, necessary, as the verb may apply to the earth itself: *As one cutting and cleaving in the earth*; i.e., with a plough or spade. Thus the sense may be: Our bones lie unburied, and as little regarded as clods of earth, or as those which, having been long ago interred, are turned up by the spade, and lie scattered on the ground. The passage may allude to the slaughter of some of David's adherents by Saul, as that of the priests and other inhabitants of Nob (1 Sam. xxii. 16-19); or it may be understood in a more figurative sense, as expressive of abject distress. The Hebrew for *grave*, being also the name of Saul, some propose to render, *Our bones are scattered by the command of Saul*; but this is quite unsupported by the practice of the Psalmist, who never mentions Saul, or his other enemies, by name, though, as Boothroyd remarks, he may possibly have used these ambiguous terms, that his followers might so apply them. Hengstenberg gives quite a different turn to the verse, which, however, seems too strained: "As the cleaving or ploughing of the ground serves to render it fruitful, so the scattering of our bones, our present depressed condition, is an earnest of new life and vigour. While our enemies are conducted from life to death (verse 6), we are conducted from death to life."  
 8. *Leave not my soul destitute*; or, *Pour not out my soul, or life*. Septuagint and Vulgate: "Take not away my life."



- 3 When my spirit was overwhelmed within me,  
 Then thou knewest my path.  
 In the way wherein I walked  
 Have they privily laid a snare for me.
- 4 I looked on my right hand, and beheld,  
 But *there was* no man that would know me :  
 Refuge failed me ;  
 No man cared for my soul.
- 5 I cried unto thee, O LORD :  
 I said, Thou *art* my refuge,  
 And my portion in the land of the living.
- 6 Attend unto my cry ;  
 For I am brought very low :  
 Deliver me from my persecutors ;  
 For they are stronger than I.
- 7 Bring my soul out of prison,  
 That I may praise thy name :  
 The righteous shall compass me about ;  
 For thou shalt deal bountifully with me.

## PSALM CXLIII.

A Psalm of David.

This Psalm is supposed by some to have been composed about the same time as the preceding, to which it bears considerable resemblance, both in

PSALM cxlii. 4. *I looked on my right hand, and beheld*; or more literally, *Look on the right hand, and behold*. The right hand is mentioned as being the instrument of action, and therefore, the most suitable place for any one to stand as a helper, defender, or advocate, or as an opposer or accuser.—Compare Psalm cxi. 5, and, in the latter sense, Psalm cix. 6. *No man that would know me*; rather, *regard, or acknowledge me*. *No man cared for my soul*; literally, *sought for my soul, or life*. This phrase generally signifies to seek to destroy, but here it evidently denotes the contrary: No man sought to preserve my life, or avenge my cause.

7. *Bring my soul out of prison*. "These people (the Hindoos) speak of afflictions, difficulties and sorrows, as so many prisons. 'Alas! when will this imprisonment go?' exclaims the man in his difficulties."—*Roberts's Oriental Illustrations*. *The righteous shall compass me about*; or, as the Hebrew verb may import, *surround me as a crown*; exult in the goodness of God's displayed in my deliverance.

its general purport and in several coincidences of expression (compare especially verses 4, 8, 9, 11, with verses 3, 5, 7, of Psalm cxlii.); but one or two other passages seem to render it very appropriate to the occasion of Absalom's rebellion, to which it is assigned by the old translators. The burden of the Psalm is a prayer for deliverance from the oppressions and persecutions of wicked enemies, yet combined with an humbling sense of the Psalmist's own infirmity, and need of the Divine mercy and guidance; "to which it owes its place among the penitential Psalms, though, from its predominant tendency, it does not belong to that class."—*Hengstenberg*. The Psalm is divided by *Selah* into two parts. The first (verses 1–6), consists of a plaintive prayer under extreme depression, yet mingled with hope from the remembrance of God's ancient goodness to His people, or former mercies to the Psalmist himself. The second part reiterates the petition, with increased intensity of feeling and confidence, and more elevated desire; praying not only for deliverance, but for Divine guidance and grace.

- 1 HEAR my prayer, O LORD,  
Give ear to my supplications :  
In thy faithfulness answer me,  
And in thy righteousness.
- 2 And enter not into judgment with thy servant :  
For in thy sight shall no man living be justified.
- 3 For the enemy hath persecuted my soul ;  
He hath smitten my life down to the ground ;  
He hath made me to dwell in darkness,  
As those that have been long dead.
- 4 Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me ;  
My heart within me is desolate.
- 5 I remember the days of old ;  
I meditate on all thy works ;  
I muse on the work of thy hands.
- 6 I stretch forth my hands unto thee :  
My soul *thirsteth* after thee, as a thirsty land. *Selah*.

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PSALM cxliii. 2. "The Psalmist had appealed in verse 1 to the Divine righteousness. This appeal has for its foundation a consciousness of personal righteousness; but with the mention of this there is naturally introduced also the thought of its great imperfection, and on this account the Psalmist betakes himself to the forbearance and pardoning mercy of the Lord, which can never be withdrawn from his servant."—*Hengstenberg*.

4. *My heart within me is desolate; or confounded, amazed, or in despair.*

- 7 Hear me speedily, O Lord :  
 My spirit faileth ; hide not thy face from me :  
 Lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.
- 8 Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning ;  
 For in thee do I trust :  
 Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk ;  
 For I lift up my soul unto thee.
- 9 Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies :  
 I flee unto thee to hide me.
- 10 Teach me to do thy will ; for thou art my God :  
 Thy spirit is good ; lead me into the land of uprightness.
- 11 Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's sake :  
 For thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble.
- 12 And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies,  
 And destroy all them that afflict my soul :  
 For I am thy servant.

## PSALM CXLIV.

*A Psalm of David.*

Several of the old versions entitle this Psalm, "A Psalm of David against Goliath;" but it may rather be regarded, like Psalm xviii., as a song of victory and praise, when the Lord had given him rest from his enemies, and established him firmly on the throne; with a prayer for continued deliverance from hostile aggression, and for the blessings of peace and prosperity.

7. *Lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit*; rather, as the marginal reading, *For I am become like them, &c.* I am on the brink of destruction. "The marginal reading is right, as it expresses the reason of his earnest request for speedy aid."—Boothroyd.

9. *I flee unto thee to hide me.* There is an ambiguity in the Hebrew verb which some render, *I reveal myself, i.e., disclose my heart, unto thee*; but the common version is more in accordance with the usual sense of the word, and more suitable to the preceding line. The literal rendering may be: *I cover, or hide, myself to thee, rather than the marginal, hide me with thee.*

10. *Thy spirit is good; lead me, &c.*; or, *Let thy good spirit lead me.* The good Spirit of God is here mentioned, in opposition to the evil spirit by which the enemies of the Psalmist were actuated. *The land of uprightness*; Septuagint, *a straight way*; Vulgate, *right path*. The Hebrew word, applied to a path or country, signifies *straight, or plain*; but the phrase here has evidently a figurative or moral sense.

- 1 BLESSED *be* the LORD my strength,  
Which teacheth my hands to war,  
And my fingers to fight :
- 2 My goodness, and my fortress ;  
My high tower and my deliverer ;  
My shield, and *he* in whom I trust ;  
Who subdueth my people under me.
- 3 LORD, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him !  
Or the son of man, that thou makest account of him !
- 4 Man is like to vanity :  
His days *are* as a shadow that passeth away.
- 5 Bow thy heavens, O LORD, and come down :  
Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.
- 6 Cast forth lightning, and scatter them :  
Shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them.
- 7 Send thine hand from above ;  
Rid me, and deliver me out of great waters,  
From the hand of strange children ;
- 8 Whose mouth speaketh vanity,  
And their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.

PSALM cxliv. 2. This verse, except the last clause, is nearly identical with Psalm xviii. 2. *My goodness*. The Syriac reads here, as in Psalm xviii. 2, *My refuge*, which is more suitable to the context. *My people*. Some Hebrew MSS. and several of the old versions read, *Who subdueth peoples under me*; but the Psalmist may allude to the submission of all the tribes of his own people to his government.

3. This verse is nearly the same as Psalm viii. 4.

4. *Man is like to vanity*; or a *vapour*, which is the original sense of the word.

5. The imagery in this and the two following verses is the same as in Psalm xviii. 9–16, but less amplified, and in the form of a prayer, instead of a narration. *Bow thy heavens, &c.* The Psalmist may here allude to the lowering of dark clouds preceding a tempest, or perhaps, especially in the next clause, to the manifestations of the Divine presence on Mount Sinai—Exodus xix. 16–18.

7. *Out of great*, or, as in Psalm xviii. 16, *many waters*; great, or many troubles, or many enemies, who are like overwhelming floods. *From the hand of strange children*; literally, *sons of the stranger*; i.e., hostile foreigners.

8. *Whose mouth speaketh vanity*, or *lying*. *And their right hand is a right hand of falsehood*. Bishop Horsley explains thus: "Their right hand hath

- 9 I will sing a new song unto thee, O God :  
 Upon a psalter *and* an instrument of ten strings will I sing  
 praises unto thee.
- 10 *It is he* that giveth salvation unto kings :  
 Who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword.
- 11 Rid me, and deliver me  
 From the hand of strange children,  
 Whose mouth speaketh vanity,  
 And their right hand is a right hand of falsehood :
- 12 That our sons *may be* as plants grown up in their youth ;  
 That our daughters *may be* as corner stones,  
 Polished *after* the similitude of a palace :

been false to themselves; it hath failed in the execution of their high threats ;" but the allusion is rather to the use of the right hand in token of friendship or in taking an oath ; the two clauses forming an exact parallel : Who with their mouth utter lies, and plight their right hand to falsehood. The Psalmist appears from the context to allude especially to alliances and agreements on the part of national rulers, which have become proverbial for insincerity and bad faith : witness the caustic remark of Voltaire in reference to William Penn's treaty with the Indians, that it " was the only treaty between those people and the Christians that was not ratified by an oath, and that was never broken."

9. *An instrument of ten strings.* So the Hebrew word may be correctly rendered, when it stands alone, as in Psalm xcii. 3 ; but when affixed to a noun, as here, without a conjunction (*and* being inserted by the translators), it is simply an adjective qualifying the noun : *A psalter of ten strings*, or a *ten-stringed lute*.—See note on Psalm xxxiii. 2.

10. Most of the old versions continue the second person in this verse : *Who givest salvation to kings* (Syriac, *the king*) : *who deliverest David thy servant from the hurtful sword*.

11. "The repetition of part of verses 7, 8, is made with great and admirable effect."—*Boothroyd*.

12. The old versions, except the Chaldee, apply this and the two following verses to the foreigners, reading the pronouns in the third person, *Whose sons are as plants grown up in their youth, and their daughters, &c.*, to which the last clause of verse 15 must then be understood as presenting a contrast : *Happy the people that is in such a case ; (but) happy, or happier, is that people whose God is the Lord*. There is, however, no mark of transition or contrast, either in the Hebrew text or the versions, and the common reading

- 13 *That our garners may be full,  
Affording all manner of store :  
That our sheep may bring forth thousands  
And ten thousands in our streets :*
- 14 *That our oxen may be strong to labour ;  
That there be no breaking in, nor going out ;  
That there be no complaining in our streets.*
- 15 *Happy is that people, that is in such a case :  
Yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD.*

PSALM CXLV.

David's Psalm of praise.

"This is the last of the alphabetical Psalms. The verse beginning with the letter *ן nun* is wanting in the present Hebrew text."—*B.C.B.* Some of the ancient versions supply a copy of verse 17, with an alteration of the first word, to give the required initial ; but the verse thus supplied has no well-founded claim to be adopted as genuine. It is not recognized by either of the old Greek translators (except the Septuagint), of whose versions some portions have been preserved, nor by the Chaldee Targum, or any Hebrew authorities, with the solitary exception of one MS., now in Trinity College, Dublin,

and interpretation may be regarded as the true one. *Our daughters as corner stones, &c.* "The paraphrase of Bishop Patrick," remarks Dr. Kitto, "doubtless conveys the real meaning, 'Tall and beautiful, like those polished pillars which are the ornaments of a palace.'" "Of a man who has a hopeful and beautiful family, it is said : 'His sons are like shoots (springing up from the parent stock), and his daughters are like carved work and precious stones.'"—*Roberts's Oriental Illustrations.*

13. *In our streets.* The Hebrew word, which is not the same as that rendered very properly *streets* in the next verse, signifies the exterior of a house or town, and must here denote *folds*, or *pastures*. Sheep are remarkable for their fecundity, and those in the East are said to be especially so, bringing forth sometimes three or four at a time, and that twice a year.—See *Burder's Oriental Literature.*

14. *Strong to labour ;* "Hebrew, *able to bear burdens*, or *loaden with flesh*."—*B.C.B.* *No breaking in, nor going out.* Some, applying these words to the clause immediately preceding, understand, *no abortion*, or *casting of the young* ; but they may rather be taken in a more general sense, *no breach*, or *failure* ; no breach from hostile incursions, or civil commotions or disorders ; no failure in our enterprises ; no loss of our people or our substance ; in short, no interruption of our peace and prosperity, no cause for *complaining in our streets.*

which is of comparatively modern date, and in which it is written apart from the text. Considering the security afforded by the alphabetical arrangement for the transmission of the Psalm in its original integrity, it seems more probable that the verse in question never existed, than that it should have been entirely lost.—See remarks on the alphabetic Psalms xxv. and xxxiv. This Psalm “is entitled, *David’s Psalm of praise*, and truly it deserves a peculiar epithet of distinction. It is constructed in six regular stanzas, the first four having three, and the two remaining four distichs each,” with a concluding doxology. “The stanzas are alternate in sentiment. The first (verses 1–3), is introductory, celebrating God’s praise in a general manner; the second to the fifth (verses 4–6, 7–9, 10–12, 13–16), celebrate alternately His greatness and His goodness; the sixth (verses 17–20), His special grace to those who call upon Him.”—*Jebb*.

- 1 I WILL extol thee, my God, O King ;  
And I will bless thy name for ever and ever.
- 2 Every day will I bless thee ;  
And I will praise thy name for ever and ever.
- 3 Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised ;  
And his greatness is unsearchable.
- 4 One generation shall praise thy works to another,  
And shall declare thy mighty acts.
- 5 I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty,  
And of thy wondrous works.
- 6 And *men* shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts :  
And I will declare thy greatness.
- 7 They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness,  
And shall sing of thy righteousness.

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PSALM cxlv. 5, 6. Most of the old versions read these verses in the third person, in unbroken continuity with verses 4 and 7, thus :—

4. One generation shall praise thy works to another,  
And shall declare thy mighty acts.
5. They shall speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty,  
And of thy wondrous works.
6. And they shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts,  
And declare thy greatness.
7. They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness,  
And shall sing of thy righteousness.

6. *Thy terrible, or marvellous, acts*; see on Psalm cxxxix. 14, where the same word occurs. *Thy greatness*; the Hebrew is here in the plural: *thy great deeds, or acts*.

7. *And shall sing*; or *celebrate*. The Hebrew verb signifies, to *praise, or celebrate with joy*.

- 8 The LORD *is* gracious, and full of compassion ;  
Slow to anger, and of great mercy.
- 9 The LORD *is* good to all :  
And his tender mercies *are* over all his works.
- 10 All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD :  
And thy saints shall bless thee.
- 11 They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom,  
And talk of thy power ;
- 12 To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts,  
And the glorious majesty of his kingdom.
- 13 Thy kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom,  
And thy dominion *endureth* throughout all generations.
- 14 The LORD upholdeth all that fall,  
And raiseth up all *those that be* bowed down.
- 15 The eyes of all wait upon thee ;  
And thou givest them their meat in due season.
- 16 Thou openest thine hand and satisfiest  
The desire of every living thing.
- 17 The LORD *is* righteous in all his ways,  
And holy in all his works.
- 18 The LORD *is* nigh unto all them that call upon him,  
To all that call upon him in truth.
- 19 He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him :  
He also will hear their cry, and will save them.
- 20 The LORD preserveth all them that love him :  
But all the wicked will he destroy.
- 21 My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD.  
And let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.

PSALM CXLVI.

"David's Psalm of praise" is appropriately followed by five others, Hallelujah Psalms, as they are termed, each beginning and ending with *Praise Jehovah*, probably composed at a late period ; though little, if any authority is to be attached to the authorship assigned to three of them by some of the old translators. The present Psalm "takes up the concluding topic of Psalm

12. The old versions read the pronouns in the second person : *thy mighty acts—thy kingdom* ; uniformly with the verses preceding and following.



cxlv., and celebrates God's mercy as manifested to mankind in general. In its last clause Zion is mentioned, thus preparing us for the praise of His particular mercy to His chosen people, commemorated in Psalm cxlvii."—*Jebb.*

- 1 PRAISE ye the LORD.  
Praise the LORD, O my soul.
- 2 While I live will I praise the LORD :  
I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.
- 3 Put not your trust in princes,  
*Nor* in the son of man, in whom *there is* no help.
- 4 His breath goeth forth,  
He returneth to his earth ;  
In that very day his thoughts perish.
- 5 Happy is *he* that *hath* the God of Jacob for his help,  
Whose hope is in the LORD his God :
- 6 Which made heaven, and earth,  
The sea, and all that therein is :  
Which keepeth truth for ever :
- 7 Which executeth judgment for the oppressed :  
Which giveth food to the hungry.  
The LORD looseth the prisoners :
- 8 The LORD openeth *the eyes of* the blind :  
The LORD raiseth them that are bowed down :  
The LORD loveth the righteous :
- 9 The LORD preserveth the strangers ;  
He relieveth the fatherless and widow,  
But the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.

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PSALM cxlvi. 3. *In whom there is no help.* The Hebrew is not the same word as in verse 5, and is more literally, *no salvation.*

4. *His thoughts perish* ; rather, *his designs*, or *purposes.* The Psalmist in these two verses may allude to the disappointments experienced by the Jews in the prosecution of the work of rebuilding their city and temple under the sanction of the edict of Cyrus, which, through the machinations of their enemies to frustrate their designs, was reversed by one of his successors.—Ezra iv.

9. *He relieveth*, rather *upholdeth*, or *supporteth*, *the fatherless and widow.* *But the way of the wicked he turneth upside down* ; or, in one word, as in the original, *he subverteth.*

- 10 The LORD shall reign for ever,  
 Even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations.  
 Praise ye the LORD.

PSALM CXLVII.

In the Septuagint, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, this Psalm is ascribed to Haggai and Zechariah. Hengstenberg supposes it was composed for the consecration of the walls of Jerusalem, under Nehemiah.—See Neh. xii. Verse 2 celebrates the restoration of the Jews from their dispersion, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem; and verses 13, 14, recur to the same subject, in terms which imply a degree of security and peace that does not appear to have been attained before his time. The Psalm consists of three stanzas, verses 1-6, 7-11, 12-20, "each beginning with a couplet exhorting to God's praise, then commemorating His mercy to His servants, and His providential power and goodness in His works of creation; the second stanza recounting these in a general way; the first and, in a more expanded form, the third, specially mentioning His mercy to Israel in the bestowal of all earthly good, and in the imparting of His statutes and judgments."—*Jebb*.

- 1 PRAISE ye the LORD :  
 For *it is* good to sing praises unto our God ;  
 For *it is* pleasant ; *and* praise is comely.
- 2 The LORD doth build up Jerusalem :  
 He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.
- 3 He healeth the broken in heart,  
 And bindeth up their wounds.
- 4 He telleth the number of the stars ;  
 He calleth them all by *their* names.
- 5 Great is our LORD, and of great power,  
 His understanding is infinite.
- 6 The LORD lifteth up the meek :  
 He casteth the wicked down to the ground.

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PSALM cxlvii. 1. This verse closely resembles, in whole or in part, Psalms xxxiii. 1, xcii. 1, and cxxxv. 3; especially the latter, where see note; the terms *good* and *pleasant*, or *lovely*, being, in the one instance, applied to God Himself, and, in the other, to the act of praising Him.

4. This verse, as rendered by our translators, attributes to the Almighty only that *kind* of knowledge, differing simply in extent, which may be acquired by a skilful astronomer. The original appears to carry the idea much farther, importing His ordination of the stars as their Creator: *He hath set, or appointed, the number of the stars; to all of them he hath given names; i.e., He hath ordained their number, and knows them distinctly and individually.*

- 7 Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving ;  
Sing praise upon the harp unto our God :  
8 Who covereth the heaven with clouds,  
Who prepareth rain for the earth,  
Who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.  
9 He giveth to the beast his food,  
And to the young ravens which cry.  
10 He delighteth not in the strength of the horse :  
He taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man.  
11 The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him,  
In those that hope in his mercy.  
12 Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem ;  
Praise thy God, O Zion.  
13 For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates ;  
He hath blessed thy children within thee.  
14 He maketh peace in thy borders,  
And filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.

7. *Sing* ; literally *answer*. This verse, as above remarked, commences a fresh stanza, which might be sung in response by another choir.

8. The Psalm is composed of couplets with the exception of this verse, which consists of three lines, the last being taken from Psalm civ. 14, to which several of the old versions add the succeeding one, *And herb for the service of man*, thus making two couplets.

9. In the second line, for birds generally, answering to *beast* in the former, the Psalmist specifies *ravens*, literally, *the sons of the raven*. "There is evidently something particular in the habits of young ravens, which led the author of Job, as well as the Psalmist, to select them as singular instances of the care of Providence.—Compare Luke xii. 24, with Matt. vi. 26. Bochart asserts that the raven expels her young from the nest as soon as ever they have the power to fly ; and in this weak state they make a croaking noise, which God is said to hear, and to defend and provide for them."—*Boothroyd*.

10. Some expositors consider the two clauses of this verse to denote the cavalry and infantry of an army, and that its object is to teach man to place his dependence in God for success and victory ; and such an interpretation appears to be favoured by a comparison with Psalm xxxiii. 16, 17. The present passage, however, may be taken in a more general sense, as expressing, in connection with verse 11, the inferiority in the Divine sight, of mere physical strength or external excellence, to piety and moral worth.

- 15 He sendeth forth his commandment *upon earth* :  
His word runneth very swiftly.
- 16 He giveth snow like wool :  
He scattereth the hoar frost like ashes.
- 17 He casteth forth his ice like morsels :  
Who can stand before his cold ?
- 18 He sendeth out his word, and melteth them :  
He causeth his wind to blow, *and the waters flow*.
- 19 He sheweth his word unto Jacob,  
His statutes and his judgments unto Israel.
- 20 He hath not dealt so with any nation :  
And *as for his judgments*, they have not known them.  
Praise ye the LORD.

PSALM CXLVIII.

This Psalm, as well as the two preceding, is ascribed by the old translators to Haggai and Zechariah. It is a most sublime ode, in which the

15. "There is here an allusion to the messengers of kings, whose decrees are swiftly spread abroad and executed."—*Boothroyd*.

16. "Chardin says that towards the Black Sea, in Iberia and Armenia, the snow falls in flakes as big as walnuts; but, not being either 'hard or very compact, it does no other hurt than presently covering a person.'—*Harmer's Observations*. Dr. Cotton Mather says: 'In a town of New England, called Fairfield, in a bitter, snowy night, there fell a quantity of snow, which covered a large frozen pond; but of such a woolly consistence that it can be called nothing but wool. I have a quantity of it, that has been these many years lying by me.'—*Burder's Oriental Customs*.

17. *Ice*. "*Korach* seems to denote here *hail*; compared to morsels from the solid form the hailstones assume."—*B.C.B.* Who can stand before his cold? The cold in Judea is sometimes extremely severe. The narratives of some expeditions of the Crusaders in the districts about Mount Tabor and the Dead Sea, state that it was so intense as to cause the death of a number of their men and beasts of burden.—See *Harmer's Observations*, and Dr. A. Clarke.

18. *He causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow*. The prevalence of wind has a tendency to repress the flowing of water from the clouds; but, as the preceding line alludes to the melting of ice, these words may be understood as referring to a *change* of wind, producing a milder degree of temperature, and thus causing the waters to flow which had been congealed by frost.

## PSALM CXLIX.

Some have ascribed this Psalm to David, in whose reign the most distinguished victories were obtained by the Hebrews; and supposed it to have been "sung when his army was marching out to war against the remnant of the devoted nations, and first went up in solemn procession to the house of God, there, as it were, to consecrate the arms He put into their hands."—*Burder*. But it is more probably, in common with the whole series of Hallelujah Psalms, the production of a later age, and the purport of it is not inappropriate to the times of Nehemiah. "As formerly, at the work," remarks Hengstenberg, "with one hand they did their work, and with the other they held the sword, so now also, after its completion, they still carried weapons in their hands, while giving thanks and praise—verse 6." "In verses 6-9, there is a reference to the conquest of Canaan under Joshua; and the author both prays for and predicts some future similar triumph of his people over their enemies."—*Boothroyd*. "This primarily received an external fulfilment in the time of the Maccabees, the proceedings of which had their root in what had been done by Nehemiah. Unspeakably more glorious, however, and beyond what they themselves understood, was the vengeance which Israel exercised in the days of the Messiah, when they took the sword of the Spirit in their hand, and thereby prevailed over their heathen neighbours."—*Hengstenberg*.

- 1 PRAISE ye the LORD.  
Sing unto the LORD a new song,  
And his praise in the congregation of saints.
- 2 Let Israel rejoice in him that made him :  
Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.
- 3 Let them praise his name in the dance :  
Let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.
- 4 For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people :  
He will beautify the meek with salvation.
- 5 Let the saints be joyful in glory :  
Let them sing aloud upon their beds.

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PSALM clix. 1. *A new song*; i.e., "an excellent song."—*B.C.B.*

3. *In the dance*; rather, *with the pipe*, the word occurring here, and in verse 4 of the next Psalm in an enumeration of musical instruments.

4. *He will beautify the meek*, or *poor*, or *suffering*, *with salvation*. "Those who were clothed with sackcloth, on account of their oppressions, He saves, and clothes with the robes of joy."—*Boothroyd*.

5. *Upon their beds*; rather, *on their couches*. The word probably denotes the couches or divans on which the Orientals recline when at ease, or at their

- 6 Let the high praises of God be in their mouth,  
And a two-edged sword in their hand ;
- 7 To execute vengeance upon the heathen,  
And punishments upon the people ;
- 8 To bind their kings with chains,  
And their nobles with fetters of iron ;
- 9 To execute upon them the judgment written :  
This honour have all his saints.  
Praise ye the LORD.

### PSALM CL.

"We have here a full-toned call to the praise of God, quite appropriate to the close of this Psalm cycle, and of the whole Psalter, in which, especially towards the end, in the Psalms belonging to the time of Israel's depression, the praise of God forms the predominating element."—*Hengstenberg*. The Jews have a "tradition that when the people of any place brought up their first-fruits to Jerusalem, as soon as they came to the mountain of the temple, every one took his basket into his hand and sung this Psalm until they came to the court of the Lord's house, where the Levites met them singing Psalm xxxvi."—*Kitto*.

- 1 PRAISE ye the LORD,  
Praise God in his sanctuary :  
Praise him in the firmament of his power.
- 2 Praise him for his mighty acts :  
Praise him according to his excellent greatness.
- 3 Praise him with the sound of the trumpet ;  
Praise him with the psaltery and harp.
- 4 Praise him with the timbrel and dance :  
Praise him with stringed instruments and organs.

meals. "While conversing together in the divan, let them sing to Him who gives them such happiness and security."—*Boothroyd*.

9. *The judgment written* ; alluding to such passages as Deut. vii. 1, 2, xxxii. 41, 42 ; where the Lord promises His people victory over the heathen.

PSALM cl. 1. "*The firmament of his power*," remarks Mendelssohn, "is every place where His strength and power are exercised ; *i.e.*, the whole world." Thus the Psalmist, commencing with the sanctuary, extends the praise of God, as in Psalm cxlviii., through the whole universe.

4. *Dance* ; see on Psalm cxlix. 3. *Organs* ; "*Ogan*, probably the *syrens*, mouth-organ, or Pan's pipe."—*B.C.B.*

5 Praise him upon the loud cymbals :

Praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.

6 Let everything that hath breath praise the LORD.

Praise ye the LORD.

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5. *Cymbals*; "*Tziltzalim*; two hollow plates of brass, which, being struck together, produce a sharp clanging sound."—*B.C.B.* The Psalmist probably refers to two kinds of cymbals, the latter producing a higher tone than the former.

6. *Praise ye the Lord.* "As the life of the faithful, and the history of the Church, so also the Psalter, with all its cries from the depths, runs out in a Hallelujah."—*Hengstenberg.*





